

Foreword by Dr Christopher Kolade (CON)

OLABOLUDELE O. SIMOYAN

THE 8TH WONDER OF THE WORLD MADE IN NIGERIA



**THE 8TH WONDER
OF THE WORLD
MADE IN NIGERIA™**

OLABOLUDELE O. SIMOYAN

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THE 8TH WONDER OF THE WORLD - Made in Nigeria

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Foreword

The main reason that I can find for my temerity in accepting the invitation to write a foreword for this work is that I have been hugely impressed by the passion with which the author has approached her task. Olaboludele Simoyan presents herself as someone who believes that the challenges of our time have been created specially to fuel her determination, first to do something about them, and then to move her compatriots to some specific, immediate commitment to effective action.

In the Biblical account of Creation, Almighty God declares, at the finish of each work, that the result is “good”. In the case of man, He is so satisfied that He declares that the outcome is “very good”. So we have been made with a natural capacity for being very good, and for doing very good things. This natural capacity is expressed in our ability to tell good from bad, and our capacity for actually choosing good over evil. The normal human being also wants to enjoy the good opinion of others about himself, and knows that this does not happen unless other people believe that they should hold such a positive view. When we actually do something good (especially if it is acknowledged by others), we experience a feeling of achievement and satisfaction.

If all this is true, why is there so much contrary behaviour in

our society at this time? Why has corruption taken such a strong foothold within the ranks of those who hold positions of responsibility? Why is it that so many of us – office holders or not – demonstrate such a high level of tolerance and acquiescence in the face of depravity and delinquency in high places? Why do we find ourselves so ready to become accessories to the misdemeanours of so many of our ‘leaders’? Why is the greed for money and power now such a seemingly normal concomitant companion of accession to political and other leadership positions?

Olaboludele Simoyan illustrates the answers to some of these questions through the experiences narrated by some of her characters in the stories told in this publication. She points to the decay that has taken place in the values that our society cherishes; she alludes to the lack of contentment that drives people’s choices – the consuming desire to have more and more by those who already have lots and lots; the tendency to ignore the God-given goodness that we already enjoy while indulging our insatiable quest for the sourness and sorrow of stealing that which we really do not need!

No doubt our collective values have gone through many years of real brutalization, and most of us are quick to blame this on the ‘aberration’ of the period between 1966 and 1999 when our nation languished in the wilderness of military governance. Simoyan’s concern – and complaint – is that the ten years since the end of military governance have witnessed a further deterioration of the situation, and that the ordinary citizen is progressively losing touch with the reality that he must lay claim to his citizenship by taking a personal role in the repair job that is crying to be done! While Simoyan – understandably – castigates the generation of her countrymen and women who have brought post-independence Nigeria to this sorry pass, she is eager to energize members

of the younger generation so that they will snap out of their acceptance of the status quo and fight the temptation to replicate the behaviour of their predecessors.

After some analytical thinking about our current situation in Nigeria, we are bound to identify with Simoyan's position. Taking only one example – our management of children in the years of their education and upbringing, we can readily see how good values have been turned on their head. If it is now normal to seek admission to tertiary institutions through 'political' influence instead of seeking to satisfy or exceed the examination requirements for entry, can it be a surprise that some of our children set out to terrorize their mentors through cultism rather than try to excel in the task of studying for which they became "students" in the first place? Are parents and their children not equally guilty of letting all this happen?

Olaboludele Simoyan soon turns her full attention to the younger generation – with good reason. Despite our often repeated commitment to our country through the words of our National Anthem; and in spite of our often intoned pledge "to be faithful, loyal and honest" and "to serve Nigeria" with all we have, the average child suffers through the real experience of a daily betrayal of the oaths which even our 'leaders' have sworn. One consequence of this is that we are steadily depriving the younger generation of their right - a country of which they should be proud - forgetting that it cannot be attractive to consider 'dying for' a country in which it has not been pleasant to live!

Simoyan's real point, however, is that we can transform our country into "the 8th Wonder of the World" if we come awake now, and join hands in building a Nigeria that will offer its younger generation the opportunity to live and grow in a land that has all

the potential to astonish the world with the true productivity of her eminent resources. It is a task to which she presses all of us, but especially the youth, the true “owners” of the challenges and opportunities of the future. Reading this ‘two-books-in-one’, we cannot fail to be struck by a number of important features:

- The author’s comfortable familiarity with the language and idiom of her principal audience – the young people;
- Her evident passion and commitment to the cause of an ‘improved’ Nigeria;
- Her courage to “call a spade a spade” at every opportunity;
- Her rich suggestions for a positive and speedy return to the path of productive sanity;
- Her determination to be a living example of the kind of leadership that she wishes for her country.

Everyone of us, but especially the generation of emerging leaders, should read this work. We should not only read, but also create frequent opportunities for coming together to consider the author’s suggestions and solutions, and finding practical ways of implementing them. Each one of us should be keen to take a personal hand in the building project of creating, in Nigeria, the 8th Wonder of the World.

Have a good read!

Christopher Kolade, CON
March, 2010

Dedication

In loving memory of my mother, Modupeola Mimoworola Simoyan, who passed on into glory on the 18th of April 2008. This book is a product of her undying faith, love and support, for which I am eternally grateful.

To the 60 angels of Loyola College, Abuja, that the nation lost in the ill-fated flight 1145 of Sosoliso Airline DC-9, which crashed at the Port Harcourt International Airport, Omagwa, on 10 December 2005: Abba Kenekwukwu, Adaka Kelechi, Adebolu Busayo, Adewoga Adeleke, Adeyemi Boluwarin, Aikhionbare Gabriella, Ajilore Daniel, Akpan Obongawan, Akwikwu Agu, Amachree Owanari, Awaji Chisom, Awaji Uzoma, Baa Vivian, Badru Toke, Chigbo Chinenye, Daniel-Kalio Fanye, Edet Helena, Egbosimba Chineonye, Egwele Uzo, Ekefre Udem Obong, Ekereuwem Aniefion, Ekwem Amanze, Ellah Ibra Ashley, Gbemudu Sandra, Ibiam Nnana, Idabor Nnamdi, Ilabor Chuka, Ilabor Nkem, Ilabor Buso, Iroghama Silvia, Kamanu Chibuzo, Loolo Immanuel, Mba Chinweoke, Mba Ijeamaka, Monago Augustine, Njoku Linda, Nkaginieme Obioma, Nkaginieme Ubani, Nnaji Chidera, Nnebedum Chukwuebuka, Ntemuse Emmanuel, Nwadei Vanessa, Nwigwe Chioma, Nwoko Stephanie, Nzelu Chidinma, Nzenwa Adachi, Okafor Chidinma, Okafor Zikora, Okemini Ibiso, Okereke Onyeka, Okpe Daniel, Olakpe Chris, Orbih Whitney, Oye-bode Mayowa, Tony-Okeke Jachimike, Ubah Ifeanyi, Udezor Richard, Ugochukwu Uzo, Ukairo Chigozirim, Utuk Peter, Wills Waifielate.

Nigeria will change for good because of you!

To every Nigerian who died as a result of the various crises (and decadence in the Nigerian society) that occurred over the years in the country. Your deaths will not be in vain!

To the Nigerian child, teenager and youth: you were born for a time like this. Your future is bright and great. Run with the vision. This book is the blueprint of your future. It will empower you to be a living WONDER to your generation.

To every Nigerian parent, your child was born to be great, your child was born to be a success, your child was born to be a positive influence in his/her generation and the generations to come. I have faith that your child will achieve that which he/she was born to do.

To the 140 million WONDERFUL Nigerian citizens, I dare believe you have what it takes to build THE 8TH WONDER of the World.

To every Nigerian child, teenager and young adult who I taught over the last twenty years, this book is the new Nigeria I always talked about in class. I know you will play your part in building a great new nation. You have been well equipped. Remember, you are on the stage now and this is your finest hour.

To my dear parents, Chief and Mrs Olayinka Simoyan, who raised me to be proud of my nation, Nigeria. You set a great and WONDERFUL example for me to follow. Thanks for believing in me. You are the greatest parents in the world!

To the Almighty and Merciful God of Nigerians who made us fearfully and WONDERFULLY so that we may become a WONDER to behold and THE WONDER of WONDERS!

About the Author

“He who sits under the tree knows the strength of the wind.”

AFRICAN PROVERB

Olaboludele Simoyan is fondly known as Auntie Bolu to a generation of Nigerian children, youths and their parents. She graduated from the University of Lagos in 1988 with three degrees to her credit - two of which are higher degrees. She is an architect by training and a salesperson by profession. She is also a motivational speaker, nation-builder and patriot. She loves teaching and relates well with young people.

In this book the author has used her training as an architect to create an innovative blueprint for a great new Nigeria. She has also used her sales skills to sell the new Nigeria to Nigerians.

The teacher in her is reflected in her style of writing, which makes it easy to read and understand. With her ability to motivate, she pushes the right buttons in the hearts of Nigerians, calling them to GREATNESS and calling them to build the WONDER OF WONDERS in THE 8TH WONDER of the World.

The author has used this book to crack the code called
N - I - G - E - R - I - A !

Preface

This book is written for you - **THE NIGERIAN CITIZEN.**

This book will engage and enrage you.

This book is designed to make you wonder and ponder.

This book will challenge your basic assumptions about Nigeria.

This book will encourage you to defy the status quo.

This book will inspire you to ask the right questions at the right time.

This book will cause you to contemplate and cogitate.

This book will motivate you to take up responsibility and exercise leadership.

This book will be an adventure into the unknown that will excite you and ignite you. This book will provoke you and invoke in you the spirit of **THE 8TH WONDER!**

WELCOME TO THE 8TH WONDER of the WORLD!

In this book, the facts have been rearranged to enable us (Nigerians) to see a different picture of ourselves. That is the picture of a **GREAT NEW NIGERIA** in **THE 8TH WONDER** of the World.

For years, I felt a burning desire to design and build a GREAT NEW NIGERIA.

I knew I was pregnant with a new vision for Nigeria but I was not quite sure how to get it out.

In 1996, I designed a graphic representation of the vision of the NEW NIGERIA that I saw in my mind's eye. I placed the vision on the wall in my bedroom where I would see it everyday. This helped me to stay connected to the vision over the years.

And from 1999, I started telling anyone who cared to listen that Nigeria would become THE 8TH WONDER of the World.

Over the last ten to fifteen years, I made it a habit to collect interesting books, magazines, articles, anecdotes and information about Nigeria (and other related issues). I somehow knew that I would need them someday. Well, that day came when I decided to write this book.

In 2005, I finally sat down to put my thoughts on paper. By the time I finished pouring out what was in my heart, I realized that I had given birth to several babies. Instead of just one book, I had written several.

This particular book is a WONDER and it will make you WONDER!

Reading this book will be an experience that will open you up to a new world of endless possibilities in building THE 8TH WONDER of the World.

You were born for a time such as this in Nigeria!

Have a GREAT DEAL OF FUN reading and creating the WON-
DER OF WONDERS!

INTRODUCTION

*“Everything can be taken from a man
but one thing: the last of the human
freedoms - to choose one’s attitude in
any given set of circumstances, to
choose one’s own way.”*

VIKTOR FRANKL

(A survivor of the Nazi concentration camps)



*"The usefulness of a torn basket
is not appreciated
until it is lost."*

AFRICAN PROVERB

What I Want to Achieve through this Book

"The hunting dog is not trained on the hunting day."

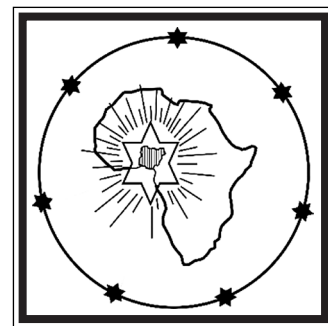
AFRICAN PROVERB

"A tree is straightened while it is still young."

AFRICAN PROVERB

I would like to achieve eight objectives through this book. They are:

- To produce a revolution of the mind in Nigerians - a wake-up call to take responsibility for our destiny.
- To help us discover and understand who we really are.
- To encourage us to feel good about ourselves and comfortable with who we are. We deserve to feel good, especially after so many years of having our psyche bastardised.
- To motivate Nigerians to imbibe the spirit of patriotism so that we can take pride in our nation and in who we are.
- To teach the principle of *The Gold Nugget in the Dirt of Our Problems*.



*"It is the hoe of
the lazy farmer
that glitters
most."*

African Proverb



- To create a new vision for Nigeria, to set goals for achieving that vision and to have a great deal of fun in the process of nation-building.
- To use this book as a catalyst for positive social, economic and political change in our society.
- To turn every Nigerian into an ambassador of goodwill for Nigeria.

*“The kola nut lasts longer in the mouth
of the one who values it.”*

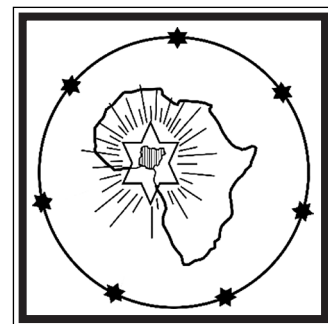
AFRICAN PROVERB

*“You should keep
your eyes on your
destination;
not on where you
stumbled.”*

African Proverb

*“Every well-built house started with
a definite plan in the form of
a blueprint.”*

NAPOLÉON HILL



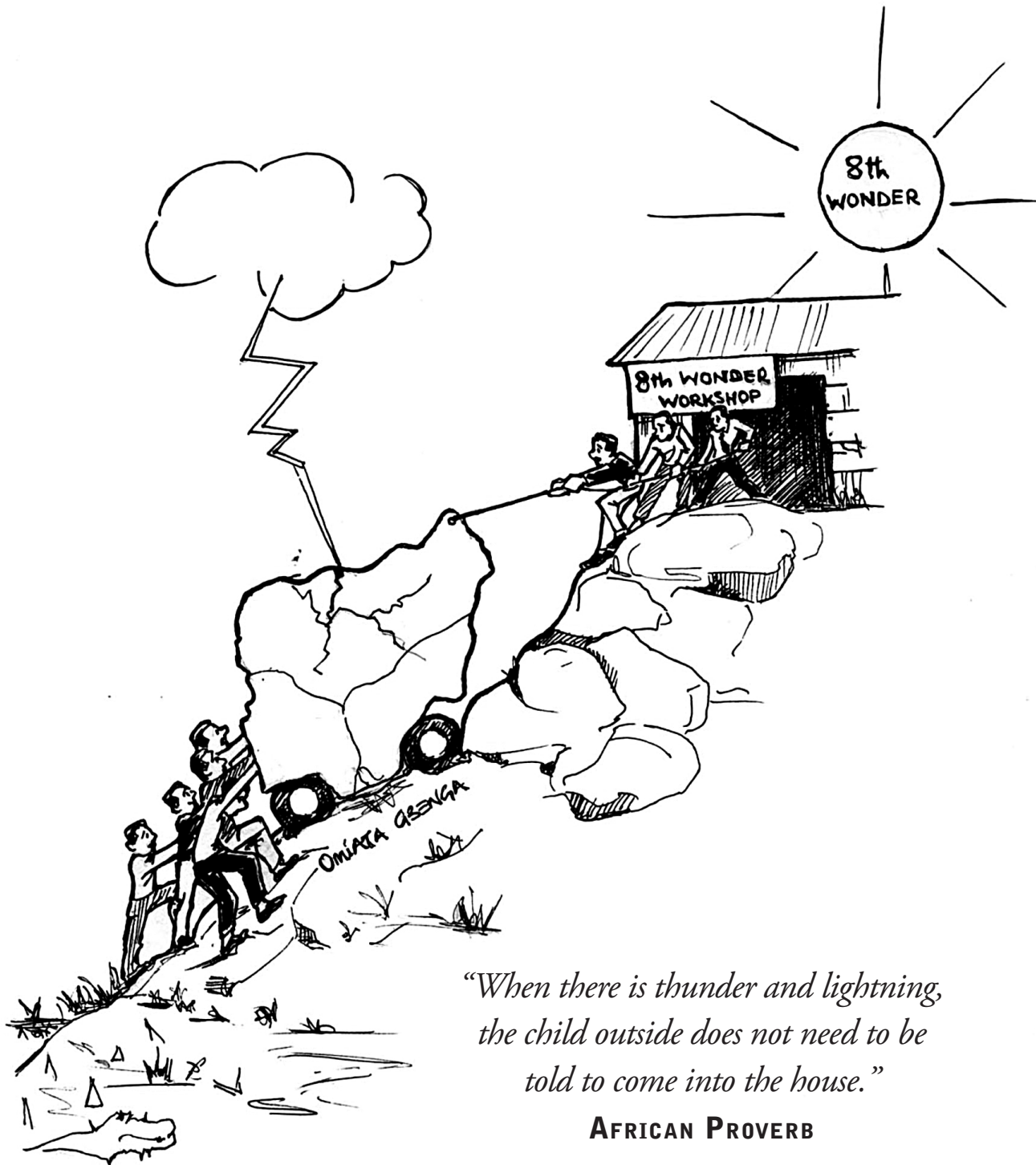
“We all need to take responsibility for transforming our country. It cannot and should not be left to the government alone. Every Nigerian can make positive contributions regardless of your age, political leanings, tribe, religion or socio-economical circumstances.”

SEGUN AGANGA

(NIGERIA LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER 2007, ISSUE ONE, P.5)

*“The first house
in a town is not
necessarily the
most beautiful.”*

African Proverb



*"When there is thunder and lightning,
the child outside does not need to be
told to come into the house."*

AFRICAN PROVERB

Why I Wrote this Book

“Only a passenger without any luggage dances on a moving canoe.”

AFRICAN PROVERB

“When a man abandons his machete in the backyard, someone else clears dung with it.”

AFRICAN PROVERB

I got tired, I simply got tired!

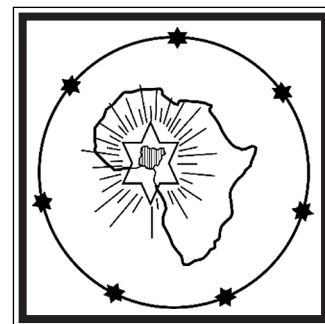
I got tired, fed up, exasperated with the Nigerian situation. How can things so simple become so complicated? How can things so basic become so complex? And how can things so easy become so ridiculously hard?

I got tired of us always complaining, criticising and grumbling about our country and doing basically nothing about it.

I got tired of us consistently blaming government for anything and everything that is wrong with our country.

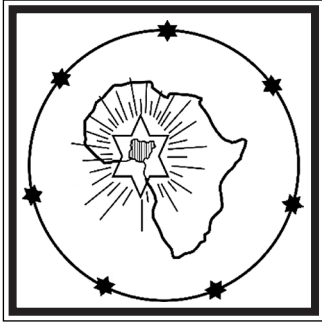
I got tired of us forgetting that we, the people of Nigeria, are the government and are therefore responsible for the present situation.

I got tired of us not taking responsibility for our destiny.



“No one rebukes a mother for breaking the cooking pot.”

African Proverb



“The crab protects itself with its vigilant eye.”

African Proverb

I got tired of our bad image in the international community.

I got tired of seeing the greatness in our country with little or no room for positive expression.

I got tired of hearing worn-out excuses as the reasons for our country's stagnation.

I got tired of us going through the same tired old problems year in, year out.

I got tired of us treading water and being reluctant to launch out into the deep sea of greatness.

I got tired; I simply got tired!

I got tired of our children and youths not being able to get the quality education they deserve.

I got tired of graduates of many years being unemployed for many more years, roaming the streets.

I got tired that some of our children do not know what it is to have water flow from the taps in their homes.

I got tired of parents panicking (every school year) for fear of not being able to pay their children's school fees.

I got tired of people dying in our hospitals because they did not even have N100 for treatment.

I got tired of all of us being stressed up and stressed out from spending untold hours in traffic.

I got tired of pensioners dying because they had not been paid their pensions for months and years on end.

I got tired of seeing people who served this land being made to look like fools.

I got tired of the lack, the deprivation and the abject poverty.

I got tired of people living from hand to mouth.

I got tired of people working hard to make a living in the heat of the day only to have little or nothing to show for it.

I got tired of us wearing second-hand clothes and shoes.

I got tired of us driving *tokunbo* (secondhand) cars.

I got tired of hearing stories of untold misery, hopelessness, doom and gloom.

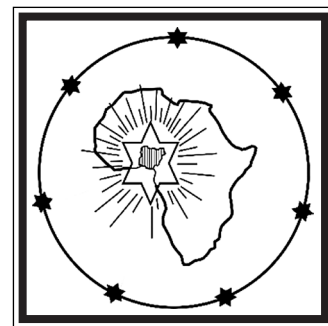
I got tired; I simply got tired!

I got tired of writing this book with a kerosene lantern because NEPA (now known as PHCN) struck.

I got tired of the free fall of our naira into the dungeon of despair.

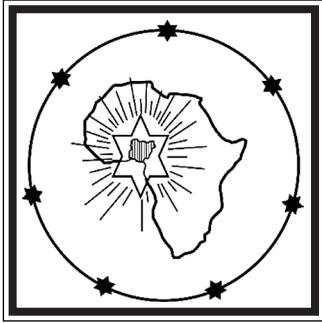
I got tired of seeing mountains of refuse all over our urban centres, especially Lagos.

I got tired of the chaos, confusion and catastrophe.



*“The elephant
does not feel
burdened with
its own tusk, it
carries it with
ease.”*

African Proverb



*“The tree which
stands close to
the river hears
the conversation
of fishes.”*

African Proverb

I got tired of all the crises - ethnic, religious, political - and the high price we pay for each one of them.

I got tired of the strangling effects of IMF and World Bank loans.

I got tired of the crushing burden of the debts we accumulated over the years.

I got tired; I simply got tired!

I got tired of the irresponsibility in high and low places.

I got tired of the irresponsibility of men of ill-will and the irresponsiveness of men of goodwill.

I got tired of evil men in our society playing Russian roulette with our destiny while the good men played safe, not wanting to get involved.

I got tired of unscrupulous men being extremists in their deeds.

I got tired of the spirit of moderation in the few good deeds of noble men.

I got tired of hearing loud and clear the voices of vile men and the barely audible whispers of the conscientious.

I got tired of seeing the passion and zeal of corrupt men as they embezzled our billions.

I got tired of the passivity and apathy of men of integrity as they remained mute in times of moral crisis.

I got tired of the bad men coming together aggressively to form the critical mass needed to allow evil to triumph in our society.

I got tired of good men trying timidly to come together to form the needed critical mass that could give birth to a positive change.

I got tired of the wicked men's well-established power blocs of oppression, repression and suppression.

I got tired of looking for where the upright men hid their power blocs of liberty, freedom and emancipation.

I got tired of evil men violently perpetrating evil.

I got tired of good men sparingly sowing seeds of goodness.

I got tired of us as a people not taking responsibility for our people, our country and our future.

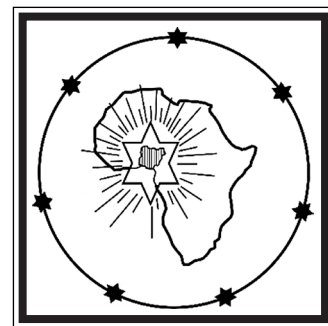
I got tired of us not doing anything because we could only do so little.

I got tired; I simply got tired!

I got tired of us groping in the dark without any clear-cut vision.

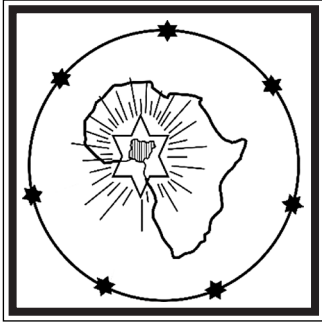
I got tired of us playing the blame game; of blaming the colonialist, the West, the military, our past leaders, the present government, etc., etc. - everybody but ourselves.

I got tired of the agents of today's superpowers becoming prophets of doom by predicting the disintegration of Nigeria within fifteen years.



*"It is dangerous
to put your hand
in the mouth of
a dog you have
not tamed."*

African Proverb



*“Those who wait
for the dead
man’s
shoes must first
of all go about
barefooted.”*

African Proverb

I got tired of us travelling all over the world - London, Paris, New York - but not for one minute conceiving in our minds the possibility of having cities of greater status in our own country.

I got tired of the *special treatment* we receive as citizens of this great country at international airports in other countries.

I got tired of us constantly waiting for Nigeria’s Messiah when, collectively, men of goodwill ought to be the messiahs unto our people.

I got tired of my country being described as one of the most corrupt in the world.

I got tired of everyone waiting for someone else to do something, even though anyone could do it but no one was willing to.

I got tired of us not wanting to pay the price for a great new nation because, whether we like it or not, sooner or later we will have to pay that price, and the later the higher; it’s just a question of time.

I got tired of having my cup of endurance spilling over and not doing anything about it.

I got tired of us remaining a nation with great potential.

I got tired of the status quo and I have decided to change it!

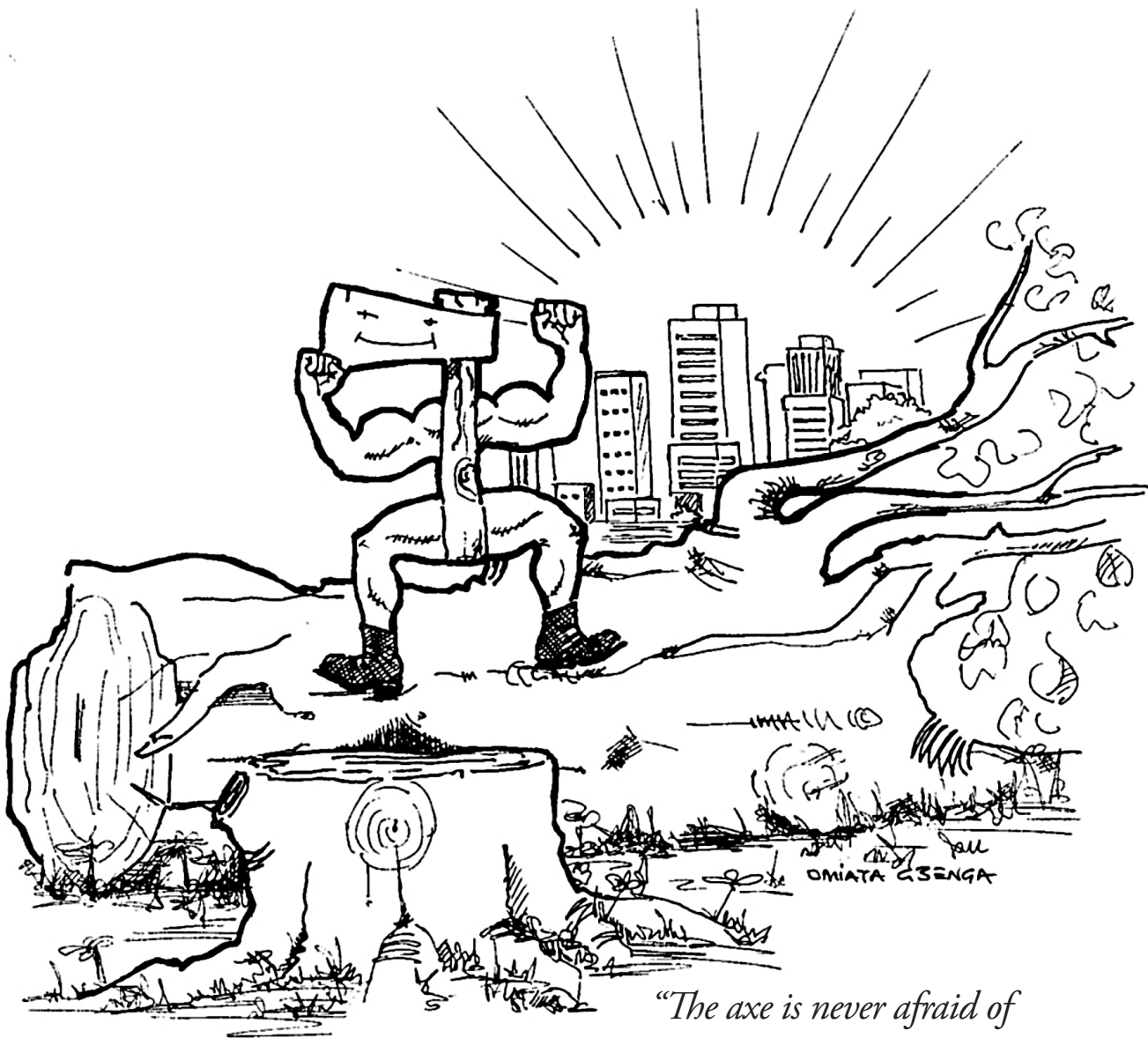
I dare to believe in a great new nation.



*P.S.: I sure hope you are tired, simply
tired and ready to change the status quo!
I dare to believe that together, we can
change the status quo!*

*“A village where
a dog kills a tiger
is not fit to
inhabit.”*

African Proverb



*"The axe is never afraid of
the tree, regardless of its size."*

AFRICAN PROVERB

Totally Sold Out

“When two brothers fight, a stranger reaps the harvest.”

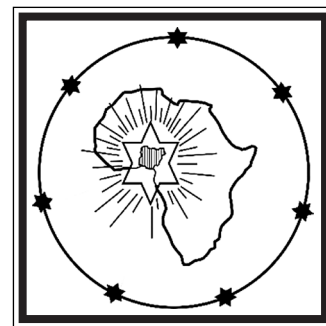
AFRICAN PROVERB

There are several important questions we need to ask ourselves (as individuals and as citizens) pertaining to our commitment to our destiny as a nation. Every citizen must be able to answer these questions as individuals.

- Am I really committed to building a new nation?
- Am I ready to pay the price?
- Am I ready to play my part as a citizen in this laudable project of nation-building?
- Am I ready to build for our children the great new Nigeria of our dreams?
- How tired am I of the status quo?
- How desperate am I for positive change?
- Am I totally sold out on the concept of a new Nigeria?

If your answer to each question was ‘yes’, it means that we are on the right path to nation-building. Nevertheless, it’s important to warn you that the journey to greatness is full of challenges.

One of the challenges is with the dream-robbers and the dream-killers. These people are ready to steal and kill our dream of a



*“A man on top
of a tree does not
need
anybody to re-
mind him to
hold on tightly.”*

African Proverb



great nation. Another is disagreements among the members of the team of nation-builders. A third is the weariness, aches and pains of our bodies from the rough patches along the path to greatness.

These are but a few of the challenges.

We will need to dig deep to construct a solid foundation for a great nation. We must build on the strong foundation of patriotism. This is to ensure that, no matter the winds or storms of life that we may face as a people, the great new Nigeria that we build will stand secure.

However, if you are not interested in nation-building, kindly stay out of the way or you will be run over by a new, bold and daring generation ready to do whatever it takes to create the new Nigeria of our dreams.

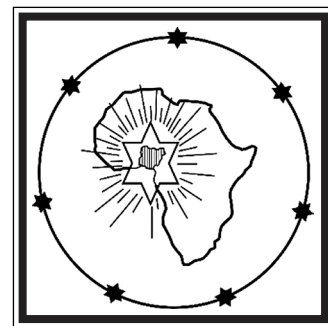
We will indeed be a wonder to behold!

*“Worry never
robs tomorrow of
its sorrows;
it only saps today
of its strength.”*

*“The same hand that kills the hare
can kill an elephant.”*

AFRICAN PROVERB

African Proverb



*“Life is short.
Focus from this day
forward on making
a difference.”*

JACK CANFIELD, MARK VICTOR HANSEN
AND LES HEWITT
(THE POWER OF FOCUS)

*“If one doesn’t
believe in God
he will believe
in something
far inferior and
worse.”*

African Proverb



*“He who hides a fire must not forget
that he can’t hide the smoke.”*

AFRICAN PROVERB

My Burning Passion for Nigeria

"The true hunter can tell different animals from the footprints."

AFRICAN PROVERB

"He who brings kola brings life."

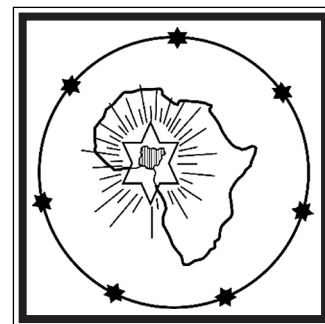
AFRICAN PROVERB

I love Nigeria passionately; however,
I don't love Nigeria because she is loveable.
I love Nigeria because I have placed a value on her - a very high value.
I am determined to bring out the very best in her.

My heart is totally connected to Nigeria.
When Nigeria bleeds, I bleed.
When Nigeria sneezes, I catch a cold.
When Nigeria goes through crisis,
I experience pain and anguish.

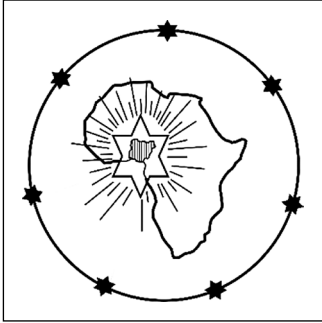
My destiny and Nigeria's are interwoven; therefore, I search desperately for answers...

Answers to our challenges.



"A facial injury is difficult to hide."

African Proverb



*“The young
snake is not
feared for its
mother’s venom
but for its ability
to sting and kill
its victim.”*

African Proverb

I must see things about our nation others don’t see.
I must hear things about our nation others don’t hear.
I must feel things about our nation others don’t feel.

What I can feel, I know I can heal!

They say that if your heart is connected to something, you know things about it that others don’t.

This must be true considering:

- Bill Gates and the computer industry
- Thomas Edison and electricity
- Michael Jordan and basketball
- Tiger Woods and golf
- And our own Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and literature

They also say that a strong desire is the beginning of achievement in life.

I have a desire, just one desire: to make my nation, Nigeria, the greatest on earth!

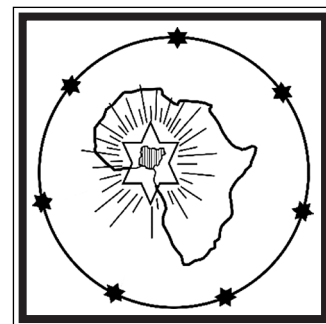
Everything I do is directed towards that desire.

I always talk about it.
It fills up my conversations with people.
It fills up my thoughts and my words.
I am completely preoccupied with my great desire for Nigeria.

It is a consuming desire!
It is a burning passion!

It has grown into a great obsession.
I have only one desire, just one:

To leave a legacy for our children and their children;
A legacy of a great nation they will be proud to call their own.



*“The proof of desire is pursuit, you will
never possess what you are unwilling to
pursue. Desire is not what you want; it
is what you cannot live without.”*

MIKE MURDOCK

*“God gave every
man two ears
because He
wants him to
listen more than
he talks.”*

African Proverb



*"No man is ever more
powerful than his
community."*

AFRICAN PROVERB

This is My Commitment

"Not only one mother cooks in the evening."

AFRICAN PROVERB

One of the reasons I am better known as Auntie Bolu to a generation of children and young adults is because they and their parents know I have a commitment to give our children a great future in a great new nation. A great new Nigeria they will proudly call their own.

I, Olaboludele Simoyan, am totally sold on the concept of a new Nigeria.

I am a nation-builder committed to creating, designing and building a great new Nigeria, the new nation of our dreams.

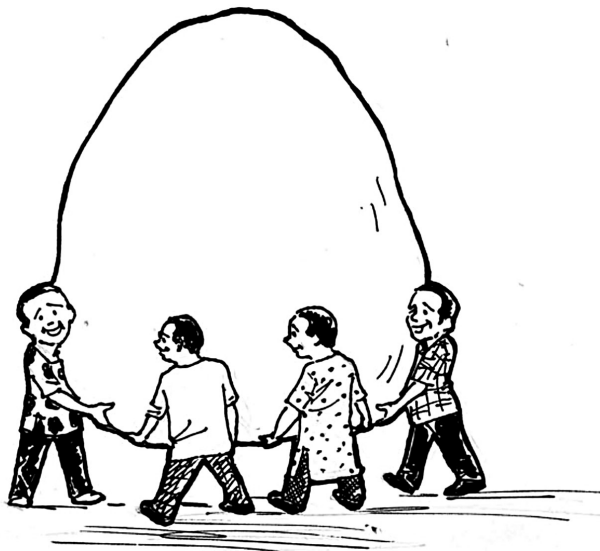
And I trust God to help me go beyond the call of duty so that I will contribute immensely in building a nation amongst nations, the greatest nation on earth - my nation, the great new Nigeria.

Olaboludele Simoyan
Signature



*"One cannot cry
more than the
bereaved,
nor be happier
than the cel-
ebrant."*

African Proverb



*"A lone finger cannot pick a
louse from the head."*

AFRICAN PROVERB

Your Commitment

"No one claps with one hand."

AFRICAN PROVERB

Please read the book first, then come back to this page and make a photocopy. If you want to be a nation-builder, fill in your name and sign on both this page and the photocopy.

Pin up the photocopy in a place where you will see it daily.

I, _____

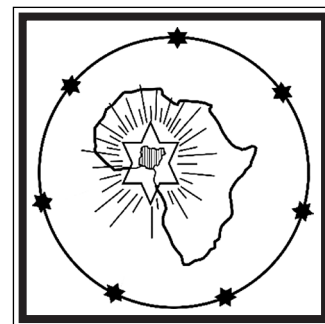
(FILL IN YOUR NAME)

am totally sold on the concept of a new Nigeria.

I am a nation-builder committed to creating, designing and building a new Nigeria, the new nation of our dreams.

And I trust God to help me go beyond the call of duty so that I can contribute immensely in building a nation amongst nations, the greatest nation on earth - my nation, the great new Nigeria.

Signature



*"That a man
avoids a quarrel
is not
cowardice."*

African Proverb

PROLOGUE

*“Evil will triumph in any society where
men of goodwill keep silent in times of
moral crisis.”*

EDMUND BURKE



*“When the mouse in front falls
into a ditch, those behind it
take caution.”*

AFRICAN PROVERB

A Letter to You, Dear Reader



“What difference are we making? Big or small, it does not matter. If everyone made a small difference we’d end up with a big difference, wouldn’t we?”

SHIV KHERA
(YOU CAN WIN, 2004)

[About the past]
“...the way I see it, you can either run from it, or learn from it.”

RAFIKKI TO SIMBA
(WALT DISNEY: THE LION KING)

“Most people see what is, and never what can be.”
ALBERT EINSTEIN

Dear Reader

I am writing this letter to you to tell you my story. Let me first of all give you some insight into my background.

My name was Moyo Aliyu Arhyel Eze. I was nineteen years of age and the only child of my parents when disaster struck my family. My father had spent millions of naira building a lovely house in Ikoyi, a high-brow area in Lagos. His primary concern was to provide a comfortable and

“The shoes do not determine how big the feet will grow.”

African Proverb



*“What tames a
boaster is pov-
erty.”*

African Proverb

secure environment for my mom and me. With the security problem in Nigeria, he figured that the best he could do for his family was to create a haven of some sort in our Ikoyi home. And he did just that.

We had everything any Nigerian family could want and more. Anything I needed my parents provided. Nonetheless, I was not “spoilt”. My mom made sure of that.

The fateful day that changed my life and everything in my family was 1 August 2005. It was about 7.30 p.m. I had driven out to see my friend, Arome, who lived down the road. We had planned with some other friends to watch Nigeria play Brazil in a friendly football match.

However, as I drove out the car suddenly stopped a few metres from home. I checked to see what was wrong and I realised that it was the new security system that had just been installed. Since I did not know how this particular security device worked, I started to walk back home to get help.

I was almost at the drive-in to our gate when two young men (about my age) crossed my path with their okada. Before I knew what was happening one of them pulled out a gun and shot me twice. One bullet lodged in my leg, the other in my abdomen.

I slumped to the ground like a sack of beans and they quickly robbed me of my cell phone, I-pod and money. Then they disappeared from the scene as fast as they had appeared.

Even though this happened right in front of the house nobody heard anything. The generators in the area completely drowned out the sound of the gun.

There I was in a pool of my own blood so close to home (my haven) with no one to help me. What a horrible irony!

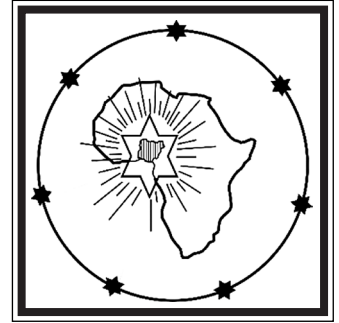
I managed to drag myself to the gate but I could not reach the doorbell. The security man was doing some work in the backyard just before I left, so I knew he would not be in the gatehouse. I resorted to banging the gate hoping that someone would hear. Unfortunately for me nobody did. Apparently, everybody was watching the football match.

After banging on the gate for about fifteen minutes there was still no help in sight. So I decided to drag myself to the car. My intention was to press the horn for as long as I had the energy. I had lost so much blood that I was close to passing out.

I mustered all the energy I could and dragged myself back to the car. Just before I reached it a jeep drove by, stopped and reversed. The Good (Nigerian) Samaritan got out, picked me up and put me in the back seat of his jeep. As he drove around looking for a hospital, I slipped in and out of consciousness. He kept talking to me and encouraging me to hold on.

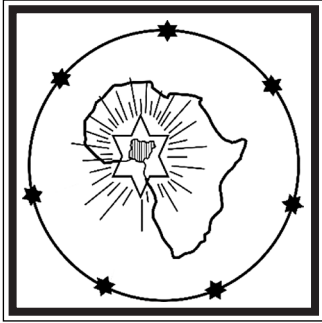
My Good (Nigerian) Samaritan took me to four different hospitals but they all refused to treat me because I had gunshot wounds. They were afraid that if they treated me the police would later come and arrest them.

Apparently, people believe that there is a law that stipulates that all gunshot patients must first get a police report to present to the hospital before they can receive treatment. Is that not ridiculous and irrational? Well, that was the unfortunate situation I found myself in on that fateful day.



*“The eye avoids
danger without
questions.”*

African Proverb



*“It is a lazy ant
that goes looking
for food during a
heavy flood.”*

African Proverb

My Good (Nigerian) Samaritan kept encouraging me not to give up. He decided to return to the place where he picked me up to enable him to scout the area for any clue to my identity.

Meanwhile, my friend, Arome, had called my cell phone three times. A strange voice finally answered. That was when he suspected that something had gone terribly wrong. He drove to my house only for him to see my car parked on the road, close by.

As Arome got out of his car, he saw a trail of blood. He ran to my car to see if I was there but it was empty. Then he called my father.

My dad came out to meet Arome. When he saw the blood, he nearly passed out. That was when my Good (Nigerian) Samaritan arrived back at the scene. On seeing my dad and Arome, he explained to them all that had happened from the time he had picked me up.

My dad and Arome ran to the jeep to confirm if it was me. When they saw me, they could not believe it. I was a sight to behold - a mess of blood and dirt. They quickly jumped into the jeep and my dad directed my Good (Nigerian) Samaritan to the family hospital.

Arome was in tears. He just could not believe what had happened to me.

I passed on before we got to the hospital. As they say, I was brought in dead. It was our family doctor that broke the bad news to my father, who wept uncontrollably. His only child was no more.

My dad kept asking, *“How could this have happened?”*

My father had the money to send me to the best hospitals in the world. However, that did not matter when I was shot. All I needed at that time was a hospital in Nigeria which would treat my gunshot wounds. All I needed was for the Nigerian society to function properly. My father's money could not help me when I most needed help. How cruel can life be?

The decadent system ate me up, just like that! It came knocking on my door and I had nowhere to hide. I became yet another innocent victim like so many others before me.

I was too young to die. I had dreams of creating a better society by building a great new Nigeria.

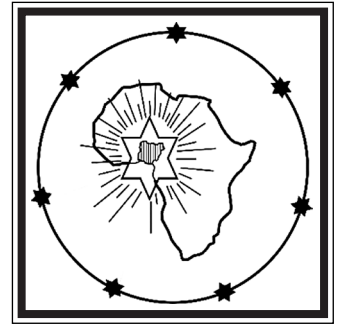
My parents were heartbroken. Nobody could comfort them. Their only child had died in spite of their efforts to create a haven for him. It was a tragedy. They felt so helpless.

My death was their worst nightmare!

So, that's my story!

If you, Dear Reader, do nothing to create a positive social change in Nigeria then you can be sure that the decadence will one day invade your life, or the lives of your family members, or friends.

The decadence in the society is not a respecter of persons. I was too young to die but DECADENCE said it did not matter. I was an only child but DECADENCE said, SO WHAT?! I was from a wealthy family but DECADENCE couldn't care less! My father thought he had done all that mattered to ensure my safety, but DECADENCE outsmarted him! I had great dreams for a great new Nigeria; nevertheless, DECADENCE came knocking on my door and shot me dead in cold blood!



*“Hens don’t at-
tend a marriage
ceremony
where the fox is
the chairman.”*

African Proverb



My prayer is that GOODNESS will flourish in Nigeria instead of DECADENCE. Please saturate the whole society with GOODNESS.

Dear Reader, if the masses are not secure, nobody else is. A nation is as strong as its weakest link.

Please, do something now to change the status quo. Do something now to create a safer Nigeria for all. Do something now to ensure that my death was not in vain.

DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

DO SOMETHING NOW!

Start by telling my story to other Nigerians. Then do something about it!

Let GOODNESS reign supreme in Nigeria.
GOD BLESS NIGERIA!

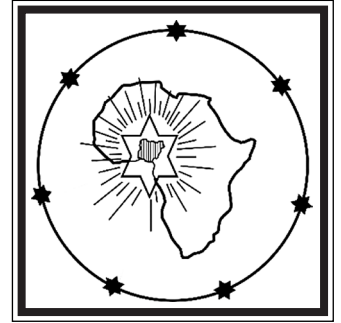
Thank you.

Love

Moyo Aliyu Arhyel Eze

*“When one sees
his friend walk-
ing with his
enemy, he
should beware of
both of them.”*

African Proverb



*“Our destiny changes with our thought;
we shall become what we wish to be-
come, do what we wish to do, when our
habitual thought corresponds with our
desire.”*

ORISON S. MARDEN

*“The goat never
wins a case in
the lion’s den.”*

African Proverb

THE PROBLEM CALLED NIGERIA

*“The problem of Nigerian unity cuts at
the very root of African unity itself.
Unity among African states will not prosper
if there is no unity within African states.”*

S E R E T S E K H A M A
(First President of Botswana)

LEARNING AFTER UNPROMISING BEGINNINGS.

“A boy was expelled from his Latin class for slow learning. He resolved to excel in English where he was slow in Latin. He was Winston Churchill.”

“A six-year-old boy was sent home from school with a note saying he was too stupid to learn. His name was Thomas Edison.”

“Sir Walter Scott’s teacher called him a hopeless dunce.”

“Louis Pasteur was reckoned the slowest learner in his chemistry class.”

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Nigeria Personified in the Person of Frank William Abagnale, Jr.



*“There is something rarer than ability.
It is the ability to recognise ability.”*

ELBERT HUBBARD

“Ability is of little account without opportunity.”

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

*“Natural abilities are like natural plants; they
need pruning by study.”*

FRANCIS BACON

The movie *Catch Me If You Can* is based on the true-life story of Frank William Abagnale, Jr. He started his career as a conman. He was America's youngest and most daring conman in its history.

From 1963 to 1969, Frank was a con artist who had worked as a school teacher, a co-pilot, a doctor and a lawyer.

In high school, he acted as a substitute French teacher and taught his unsuspecting classmates. He later flew over two million miles free as an impostor Pan Am Airline co-pilot. After which he be-

*“A trader who
keeps mute never
sells his
wares.”*

African Proverb



*“A wise man finds
out the dying cries
of a man slain in
battle before com-
posing a dirge in
his honour.”*

African Proverb

came the chief resident doctor of paediatrics in a Georgian hospital, and finally an assistant attorney-general for the state of Louisiana!

He had stolen millions of dollars from all fifty states in the US and twenty-six other countries through forged cheques and counterfeiting. He accomplished all these things by the age of twenty-one. The law eventually caught up with him and he was imprisoned.

In 1974, he was released from jail and his story changed for good. The FBI employed him and he helped capture some of the world's most elusive counterfeiters and cheque forgers.

As one of the world's foremost authorities in counterfeiting and forged cheques, he is paid millions of dollars annually for services to banks, financial institutions and Fortune 500 companies. He has helped design many of the secure cheques used by these companies every day.

I have gone through the trouble of giving a short narrative of Frank's story so that you can see an interesting correlation. Frank Abagnale is the personification of Nigeria. Frank the con artist was smart, intelligent, resourceful, creative and persuasive. He also had fantastic PR skills, an eye for detail and an analytical mind. He was always thinking a dozen steps ahead.

He found loopholes easily, which helped him circumvent any system he desired. Unfortunately, he misused, abused and mischannelled his skills, talents and resourcefulness.

When he was finally released from prison and started working as an FBI agent, he did not, all of a sudden, acquire a new set of talents and

skills. It was basically the same set of natural gifts that he had consistently abused as a con man that he now channelled productively.

I see Nigeria in the same predicament as Frank. He represents to me the embodiment of the Nigerian situation.

Nigerians are a resourceful set of people who easily find loopholes in any system. It is said that if you have a system you believe is foolproof, get a Nigerian to test it. If the Nigerian can't find a loophole, then you know for sure that it is indeed foolproof.

As a nation, we have the resources, talents, skills and abilities which for years we have abused and misapplied to our disadvantage. Like Frank, the law finally caught up with us and we have been imprisoned for years in the Crisis and Negative Image Prison. It is now time for our release.

I dare say that our story will change in the nearest future.

We will learn to channel our resources and skills productively, making our own useful contributions to the global community.

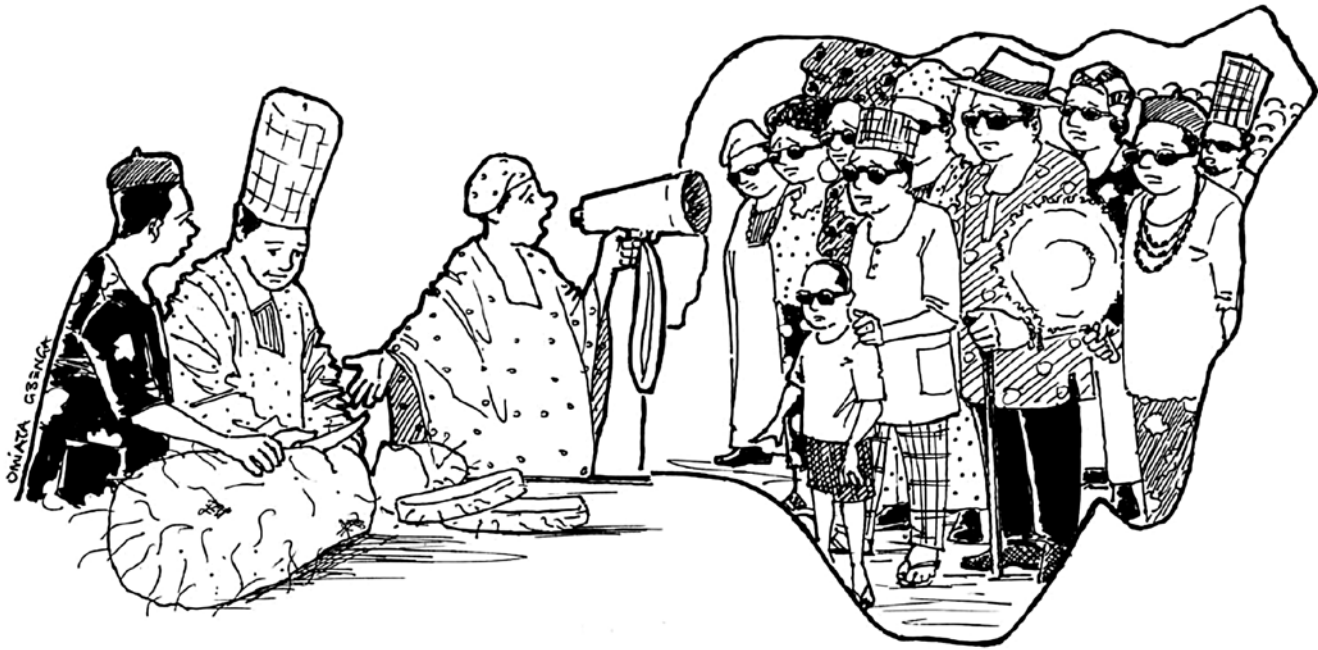
*“All our talents increase in the using,
and every faculty, both good and bad,
strengthens by exercise.”*

ANNE BRONTE



*“It is not strength
or might that
opens a locked
door, you must
use a key.”*

African Proverb



“If you are helping a blind person to remove the hard skin of a roasted yam, you must keep talking, otherwise he might think that you are eating up his yam.”

AFRICAN PROVERB

A Fundamental Paradigm Shift in Thinking



"We have stood too long on the sidelines; and too many of us have adopted the cynical attitude that since you cannot beat them you must join them."

CHINUA ACHEBE

"The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at, when we created them."

ALBERT EINSTEIN.

"You are today where your thoughts have brought you; you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you."

JAMES ALLEN

Whitewashing Nigeria's image (which is basically what we have been doing) is superficial and won't solve the deeper and more fundamental problem of how we see ourselves as a people, and as a nation.

There is no quick-fix solution.

What we have to do is look inside ourselves to find a lasting solution to our problems as a nation. This deeper level of thinking

"What the goat has seen and is silent about, is what the dog sees and barks."

African Proverb



*“The kola nut
has more value
in the jaws of an
elder.”*

African Proverb

is what Stephen Covey calls principle-centred, character-based, inside-out thinking, starting foremost with the self - our paradigm (i.e. the way we see in terms of perceiving, understanding and interpreting), our character and our motives. (Covey, 1989)

The present picture that we, as Nigerians, see of our country is images of corruption, 419 (advance-fee fraud), credit card scams, drug trafficking, bad leadership, etc. The image problem is really the fallout of a greater problem of not knowing who we are, what we want, where we are going and what we stand for.

A radical change in our mindset is imperative!

If we want to build a great nation, we have to be able to see a vivid picture of a great nation in our mind's eye. We need to find our gold nuggets in the dirt of our problems. Those gold nuggets are what we will use as the building blocks of a great nation.

To reach deep within for the answers to our image problem (and other problems), we have to dream today of the realities of tomorrow's great new Nigeria. To create that great nation of our dreams, we have to:

- Elevate our thinking about Nigeria
- Change our thinking about Nigeria
- Change our words about Nigeria
- Change our vision of Nigeria
- Change the picture of the old Nigeria (in our minds) into the picture of the new Nigeria

We have to clearly see where we are going before it begins to manifest itself in our external circumstances.

The problem with Nigeria and her image has never been out there in the international media, but right here – in the Nigerian mind. Likewise, the solution is not there in the international community but right here – in the Nigerian community.

Great nations think themselves into greatness.

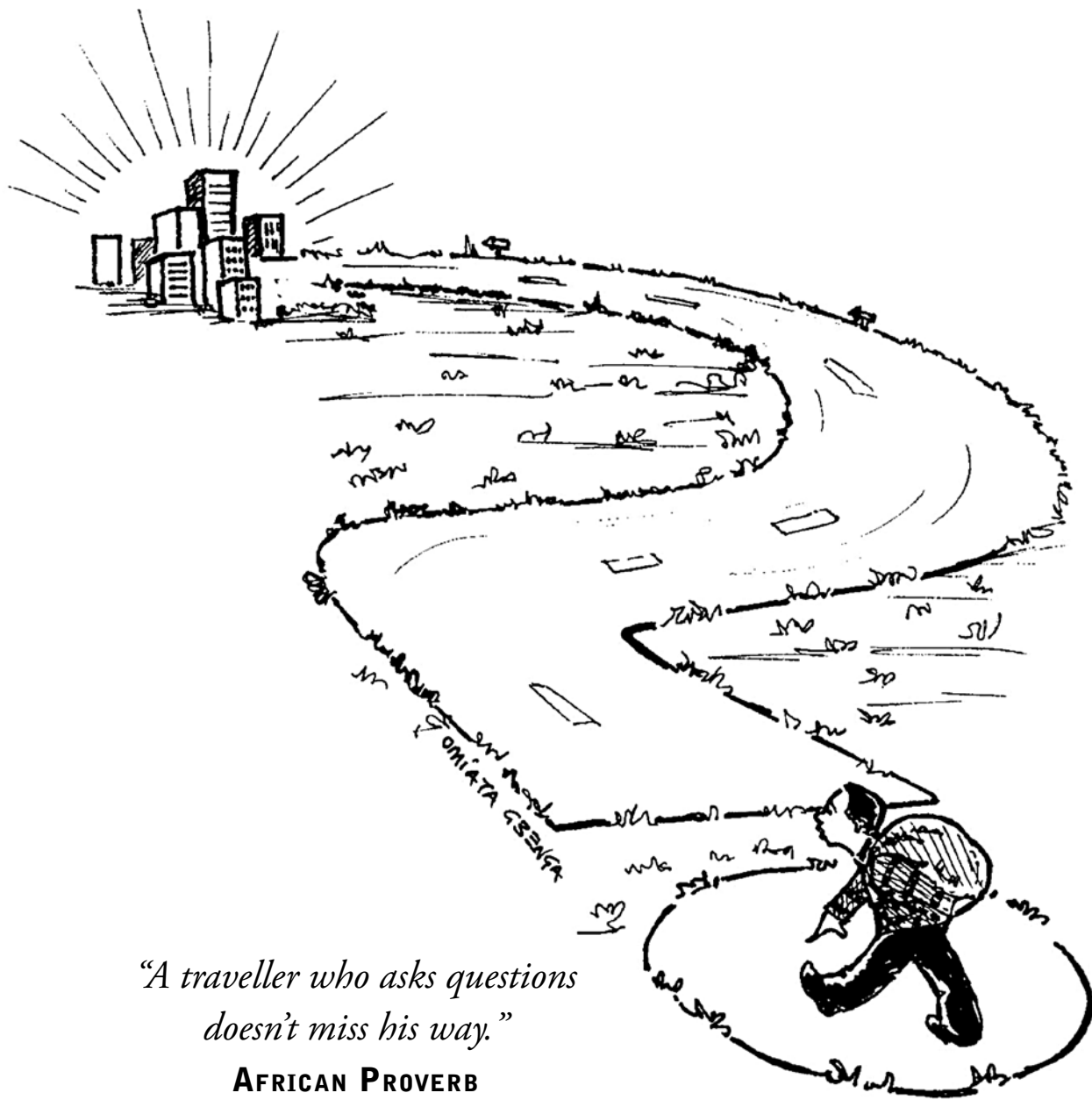


“The United States of America is great today, not because the people are better than Nigerians, not because they are smarter, but because they do what they are expected to do. Americans act based on what the law states. I don’t mean all of them, but most do. Any American who refuses to obey the law goes to prison immediately. In the United States, nobody is above the law, but in Nigeria, almost anybody is above the law. When you are in the US, you must obey the law or you are out.”

GBENGA OLORUNSIWA
(THE GUARDIAN, 28 JULY 2006, P. 53)

“You don’t throw stones at a fruitless tree.”

African Proverb



*"A traveller who asks questions
doesn't miss his way."*

AFRICAN PROVERB

What is the Problem with Nigeria?



“The important thing is not to stop questioning.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

“The first key to wisdom is assiduous and frequent questioning. For, by doubting, we come to inquiry, by inquiry we arrive at truth.”

PETER ABELARD

“A serious problem requires a very serious solution.”

DR. TONY RAPU

(THE MESSAGE AND MUSIC OF THIS PRESENT HOUSE,
15 MAY 2005)

The problem with Nigeria (and Nigerians) is that, as a nation, we have not been able to answer the following basic questions:

- Who are we?
- What do we stand for?
- What is Nigeria’s purpose?
- What does Nigeria exist for?
- Why does Nigeria exist?
- Why are we Nigerians?
- How did we get ourselves into this dilemma?

*“The leopard
cannot change
his spots.”*

African Proverb



“When a bird in
flight is tired, it
perches on the
nearest tree.”

African Proverb

- Who is responsible for where we are?
- What do we want and how are we going to get it?
- Where are we going?
- How are we going to get there?
- When will we get there?
- Where do we want to be - 5, 10, 20, 30, 40...100 years from now - and how can we get there?
- What lessons have we learnt from the past?
- How can we dig out Nigeria's gold nuggets from the dirt of its bad image?
- What is it that we want to achieve and how are we going to achieve it?
- Will we be committed and determined to achieve whatever goals we may set for ourselves?

The key is the ability to ask the right questions at the right time and get the right answers at the right time. This is always the best place to start in analysing a problem or a situation because timing, as they say, is the essential ingredient in life.

In *The Third Wave* (1980), Alvin Toffler asserts, “*I came to appreciate that the right question is usually more important than the right answer to the wrong question.*”

Listed below are some more questions we need to answer as citizens of Nigeria. Please take your time to go through them and try to answer them. In doing so, we will be able to chart our course to greatness - the great new Nigeria of our dreams.

The Eighty-eight Questions of Nigeria

1. What is our fundamental reason for being?
2. What guides and inspires us as a people and as a nation?
3. What are our values?

4. What are our guiding principles?
5. What should Nigeria's fundamental goal be?
6. What should Nigeria's other goals be?
7. What makes a nation great?
8. What will make Nigeria great?
9. How can we build a great new Nigeria?
10. How can we create a compelling vision that every Nigerian can buy into?
11. How can we paint a clear picture of the new Nigeria of our dreams?
12. What is great about the Nigerian problem?
13. As a Nigerian citizen, what am I willing to do to make Nigeria the way I want it to be?
14. What am I ready to stop doing to make Nigeria the way I want it to be?
15. How can I enjoy the process of nation-building while I do what is necessary to get Nigeria to the Promised Land of greatness?
16. What do we, as Nigerians, want? What do the Tivs want? How about the Jukuns, the Efiks, the Hausas, the Igbos, the Yorubas, etc.?
17. What do we need?
18. What do we value?
19. What do we expect?
20. What are our interests as Nigerian citizens?
21. What is the Nigerian's frame of reference?
22. What are our beliefs as Nigerians?
23. What do we stand for as a nation? Where do we want to go next?
24. What is our national ideology?
25. What is our vision?
26. What are our hopes, dreams and desires?
27. What do we want to create?
28. What is important to us as Nigerian citizens?



*"Apply a little
foolishness on a
thorny
situation to be-
come wise."*

African Proverb



*"He who tears
the garment of
honour wears
the mask of dis-
grace."*

African Proverb

29. What price are we willing to pay to make our nation great?
30. What do we believe in?
31. What contributions do we want to make in the global village community?
32. What legacy do we want to leave behind that future generations will benefit from?
33. What do we want Nigeria to stand for? What do we want our nation to be?
34. What do we want to achieve?
35. What will guide our decisions so that we can achieve what we want?
36. What can motivate us into greatness?
37. If all the things we desire are possible, what should we be doing right now to ensure our nation becomes great?
38. What is the Nigerian way vis-à-vis the American way or the British way or the Japanese way?
39. Do Nigerians make you wonder?
40. How can the various ethnic nationalities live together in peace and harmony?
41. How can we evolve a government to which all of us will be committed?
42. How can we evolve a government that will guarantee every Nigerian equity and justice?
43. How can we communicate our new vision both to fellow Nigerians and to the international community?
44. How can we change the strategy for prosperity from natural resources to human capital?
45. How can the private sector get more involved in nation-building?
46. How can all Nigerians get involved in nation-building?
47. Name some of Nigeria's many problems.
48. What are the possible solutions to those problems?
49. What are the little things that cause great problems in our

society? And what are the other little things that will ensure positive change?

50. Out of all our problems, which one should we solve first?
51. Which one of our problems do you think could cause the disintegration of Nigeria? What can we do to prevent it?
52. Which one of our problems is the most volatile?
53. How can we turn this volatile problem around and use it to our advantage by getting Nigerians to stand in unity?
54. Who are those that hold Nigeria – and therefore Nigerians - in contempt both inside and outside the country?
55. Who are the scorners in Nigeria?
56. Who are those that cause division, strife and contention?
57. Who would you say are the power brokers?
58. Who are the people that will influence our society?
59. Why in the world should we stay together as a nation? Give reasons why Nigeria should not disintegrate. Also, give reasons why Nigeria should remain one nation.
60. What are the things that bring Nigerians together in unity and agreement regardless of age, sex, ethnic bias, religion and political affiliation?
61. What things can we use to foster greater unity?
62. What are the things about Nigeria that make you beam with pride?
63. What distinctions can Nigeria make about herself?
64. What are Nigeria's strengths as a nation?
65. What are Nigeria's weaknesses as a nation?
66. What are Nigeria's assets? What are her liabilities?
67. What are Nigeria's opportunities?
68. What are our possibilities for change?
69. What can be done to turn things around?
70. What are the things we can do to sell Nigeria to Nigerians?
71. What is the mindset of the average Nigerian?
72. How can we create a positive mindset in Nigerians?



*“The snail can-
not boast of
horns when
animals with
horns are gath-
ered.”*

African Proverb



*“If a thief kisses
you, don't forget
to count your
teeth.”*

African Proverb

73. What are we known for (good or bad) nationally and internationally?
74. How can Nigeria position herself in the evolving global village economy?
75. How can Nigeria distinguish herself in the comity of nations?
76. Can globalisation benefit us?
77. How can we make globalisation benefit Nigeria?
78. How can we take advantage of globalisation?
79. How can we make Nigeria a force to be reckoned with in the global information and communications technology (ICT) industry?
80. How are we going to find Nigeria's positive side with all the bad image and bad publicity we have acquired over the years?
81. Is it possible for us to make the name Nigeria conjure up positive things in people's minds in spite of the worldwide negative perception?
82. As a Nigerian, how would I like Nigeria to be?
83. If the future of Nigeria as a nation depended on me, what would I do?
84. What can I do on a daily basis to get Nigeria to the Promised Land of greatness and abundance?
85. What can I do to create a positive change in my immediate environment?
86. If Nigeria were to disintegrate today, what do we stand to lose? And as an individual citizen, what do I stand to lose?
87. How can we produce a REVOLUTION OF THE MIND in Nigerians? How can we start a campaign for a GREAT NEW NIGERIA?
88. What do we need to do to crack the code called
N - I - G - E - R - I - A ?

We will attempt to answer some of these questions together as you read on.

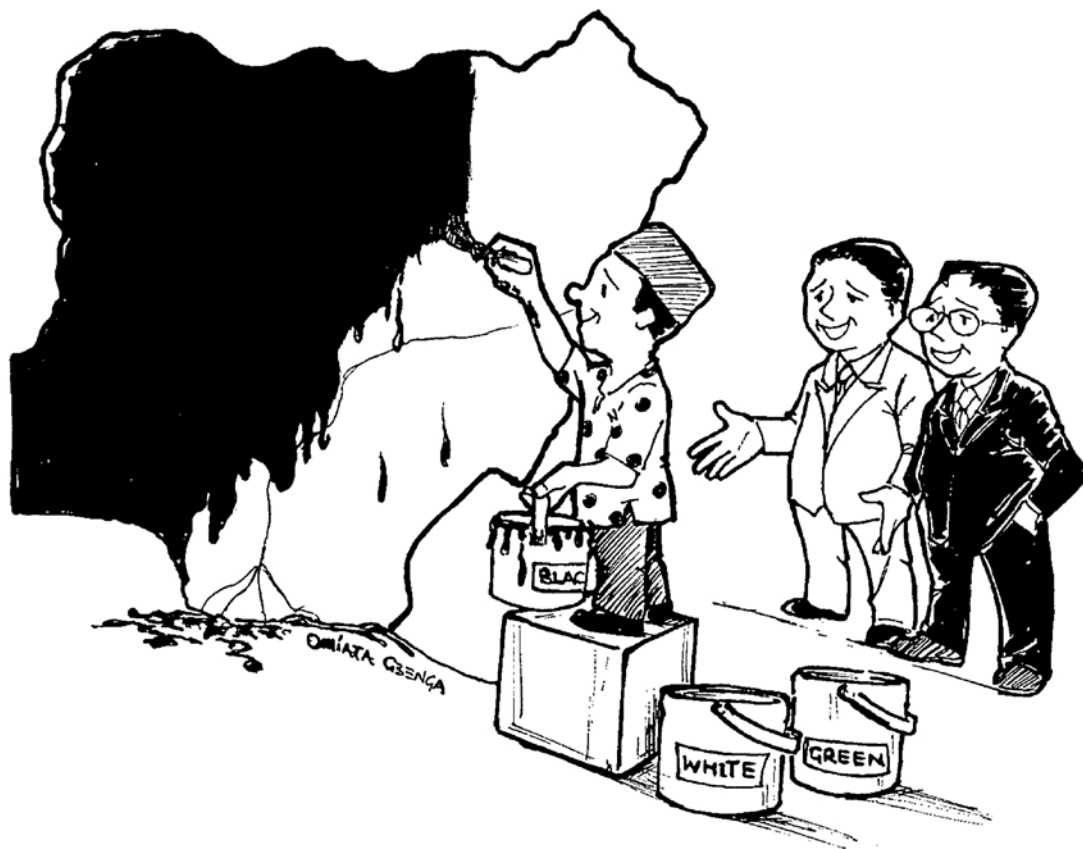


*“So you’ve got a problem? That’s good!
Why? Because repeated victories over
your problems are the rungs on your
ladder to success. With each victory you
grow in wisdom, stature and experience.
You become a bigger, better, more suc-
cessful person each time you meet a prob-
lem and tackle and conquer it with a
positive mental attitude.”*

CLEMENT STONE

*“The cockroach
will want to
dance
but the fowl will
not allow it.”*

African Proverb



*"There is a way a person will eat
his own food and people will call him a thief."*

AFRICAN PROVERB

How Do You See the Problem of Nigeria's Perceived Bad Image?

"An interesting lesson we've learnt from history is that we've learnt little from history."

OMOLOLU OKUBOYEJO

"It isn't that they can't see the solution. It is that they can't see the problem."

G. K CHESTERTON

"To conquer self is the best and noblest victory. To be vanquished by one's own nature is the worst and most ignoble defeat."

PLATO

The way we see the problem is the problem, says Stephen Covey in *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989). Applying this to Nigeria, we can say that the way Nigerians see Nigeria's many problems and its bad image *is* the problem.

Many of us Nigerians believe that the international media are to blame for Nigeria's bad image because of their consistently negative projections over the years. It is true that the world has been guided by the international media's negative presentation. However, they are not the primary or even the main cause.



"When a lazy man decides to go to the farm, the whole place gets filled with soldier ants."

African Proverb



“Tie two birds
together, though
they now have
four wings, they
still cannot fly.”

African Proverb

Previous Nigerian governments tried to launder Nigeria's image internationally but they were never successful. They failed because the problems and the solutions were not out there but in the mindset of Nigerians. You cannot act or see differently from the way you perceive and understand yourself to be.

This brings to mind a story I read in a *Daystar Christian Centre* tract about barbers and hairstylists in the US. One year they decided that the time had come to draw the attention of Americans to the significance of their profession. For their forthcoming national convention they hired a public relations consultant to package promotions that would have a great impact.

A drug addict called Al was hired from the ghetto. The consultant took a set of photographs of Al in his smelly clothes and with unkempt hair. Then he took Al to town and gave him a bath, after which he took another set of photographs.

Finally, Al was taken to a salon where he was given a haircut and a shave. Then the consultant dressed Al in a suit so that he looked like a young, upwardly mobile business executive. At this point, the consultant took another set of photographs.

On the day of the convention participants from all over the country arrived at the venue to see three giant-size framed pictures of Al in the lobby. The first showed him as a drug addict in the ghetto. The second showed him after he had had a bath. The third showed him dressed up as a young business executive.

A banner over the three pictures read, *SEE WHAT THE BARBERS AND HAIRSTYLISTS OF AMERICA CAN DO TO A MAN*. Al himself was in the lobby to shake the hands of the

participants. The following day the story hit the headlines. The gambit worked. The manager of the venue really liked Al and offered him a job. He asked Al to come back later. Needless to say Al, the drug addict, did not go back.

After some months the manager remembered him and decided to look for him in the ghetto. He took one of the framed pictures with him and asked around but nobody seemed to know the person in the picture.

It finally dawned on the manager to use the picture of Al that showed him dirty and unkempt. Within one hour he had found him.

The public relations' consultant was able to change Al externally and make him look like a young business executive but he wasn't able to change him internally. He couldn't get the drug addict out of Al.

Al couldn't act or see differently from the way he perceived and understood himself, which was why he went back to his old way of life. To create a positive and new image for Nigeria, we must see Nigeria and ourselves differently. We must, of necessity, be different people.

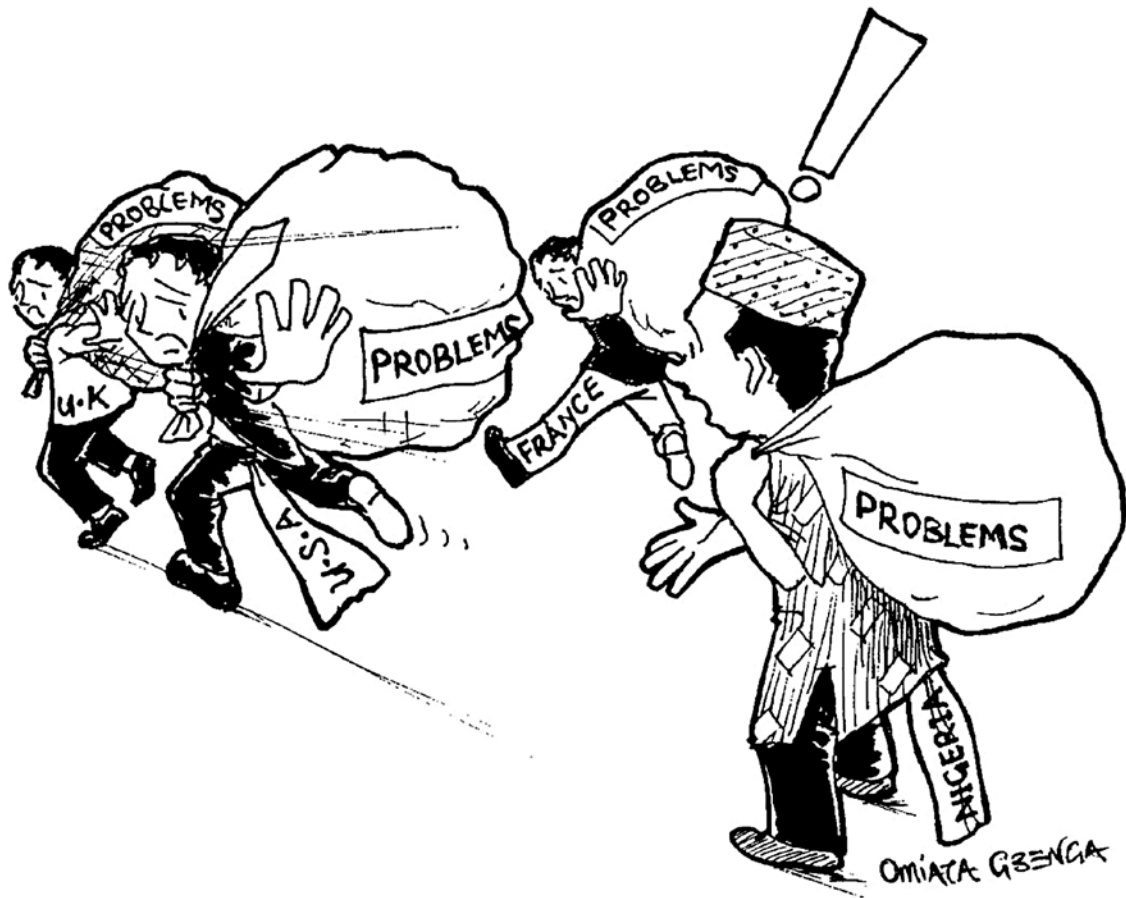
“There is a great difference between knowing and understanding: you can know a lot about something and not really understand it.”

CHARLES F. KETTERING



*“The sky is wide
enough for all
birds to
fly in without
touching one
another.”*

African Proverb



*“The mouth that speaks out whatever comes into it
must accept whatever happens to it.”*

AFRICAN PROVERB

Perception is Stronger than Reality

“What the old man sees while sitting, a young person cannot see even if he climbs a tree.”

AFRICAN PROVERB

“The snail thinks that by pouring saliva into the fire it can quench it, hardly realising that it is on the path of death.”

AFRICAN PROVERB

“Only in quiet waters do things mirror themselves undistorted. Only in a quiet mind is adequate perception of the world.”

HANS MARGOLIUS

We frequently hear that perception is stronger than reality but how true is it? In examining facts about other countries, one discovers some interesting things which help explain the predicament that we have found ourselves in as a nation.

France has more crime per 100,000 people (the unit of measurement used by Interpol) than any other country in the world. Yet, France can boast of being the world's topmost tourism destination, with no fewer than seventy-six million tourists annually.



*“When the cock
crows in the
morning,
the heart of the
debtor skips a
beat.”*

African Proverb



*"It is better to be
a lion for a
day than a sheep
all your life."*

African Proverb

South Africa has the world's highest rape cases among tourists. Johannesburg is the city with the highest crime rate in the world. However, South Africa is the topmost tourism destination in sub-Saharan Africa, with no fewer than six million visitors annually.

Despite the high crime rate, South Africa hosted the FIFA World Cup in 2010.

In Egypt, many tourists are killed annually by religious extremists. Nevertheless, in 2005, Egypt had about eight million visitors.

The Middle East is the most volatile region in the world, yet millions attend the annual holy pilgrimages to Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Italy is the world's capital for organised crime; notwithstanding that, almost every well-known multinational company has a presence there. Italy is also the world's fourth largest tourism destination, with over forty-one million visitors annually. If tourists are bothered about the Mafia, the Italians are quick to tell them that theirs is also the country of ancient Rome, AC Milan, Gucci, etc.

When someone says 'France', what comes to mind? *Fashion? Beauty? Splendour? The Eiffel Tower? The Arc de Triomphe?*

How about Egypt? *The pyramids? The Sphinx? Mummies?*

What immediately comes to mind when you hear about South Africa? *Apartheid? Nelson Mandela? Sun City? Gold Leaf City?*

And Brazil? *Football? Rio de Janeiro? Sao Paulo? The Brazilian carnival? Christ the Redeemer statue?*

How about when the United States is mentioned? *Freedom? Liberty? Land of opportunities? The Statue of Liberty? The American flag? Uncle Sam? New York City? Hollywood?*

How about Nigeria? What do you immediately think of? Write them out below:



From the above findings, one can conclude that, despite the negative activities of a handful of miscreants in those countries, their tourism industry has not been affected in the least.



It is evident that these various countries talk up their strengths. Their governments deliberately project positive images.

The private sector also contributes, consciously or unconsciously, to projecting their country in a positive light, as seen by Italy's Gucci. This is what we basically need to do in Nigeria.

The problem we apparently face in Nigeria is that we have focused for too long on our weaknesses. We don't seem to know our strengths; we don't understand who we are as a people and as a nation. In the process, we send out confusing and conflicting messages about ourselves.

With the help of a few unpatriotic Nigerians, we have ended up with negative publicity and the international community has taken the liberty to brand Nigeria in that light.

*“He who sings
to God prays
twice.”*

African Proverb



*“A black goat is
not chased in the
dark.”*

African Proverb

If we don't understand who we are as a nation, how can we expect others to do so? How can we expect to attract the right kind of people into Nigeria if they expect the worst?

Those things that people expect to see when they visit a particular country are called tourist attractions. It is said that people are attracted to the strongest impressions in their minds.

In Nigeria, we have many tourist attractions, for instance:

- Yankari National Park
- Kainji Lake National Park
- Olumo Rock
- Agbokim Waterfalls
- Chad Basin National Park
- Gashaka Gumti National Park
- Zuma Rock
- Old Oyo National Park
- Obudu Cattle Ranch
- Cross River National Park

These are just a few, but many tourists don't even know about them.

The negative publicity we have received over the years is the only thing they know. The picture most people have of Nigeria is so warped that it bears little or no resemblance to our country.

The main issue at stake here is the perception of Nigeria, both at home and abroad. So, what are the various steps we can take to change it?

Write down your ideas or opinions:



*“When a child falls he looks forward;
but when an adult falls he looks
backwards.”*

AFRICAN PROVERB

*“The hawk can-
not be asked to
take
care of chicks.”*

African Proverb



*“The earthworm praises the earth
and the earth allows it to pass through easily.”*

AFRICAN PROVERB

The Power of Words



“The secret of advancement in life lies in the ability to say the right kind of words.”

E. W. KENYON

“Our words are a faithful index of the state of our souls.”

FRANCIS DE SALES

“Some of mankind’s most terrible misdeeds have been committed under the spell of certain magic words or phrases.”

JAMES BRYANT CONANT

Words paint pictures.
Words produce images.
Words cause despair.
Words give hope.
Words induce fear.
Words build up faith.
Words start wars.
Words negotiate peace.
Words destroy.
Words heal.

“When a foolish man begins to be wise, know that he has exhausted all he has.”

African Proverb



Words break us.
Words make us.

The most powerful entity in the world today is words. We must take responsibility for the words we speak in relation to our nation.

Words were the tools that Adolf Hitler used to unleash terror on the world. Joseph Goebbels, the minister for propaganda during Hitler's regime, once said, *"Tell a lie a thousand times and it will become the truth."* He obviously understood the power of words.

Some years ago, a survey was undertaken by Stanford University and they discovered that, to change someone's opinion, the individual would have to hear the information eleven times to eliminate the old opinion and seven times more for the new opinion to become entrenched.

By deduction, this means that to change your mind you will have to hear something at least eighteen times.

That explains why TV commercials and radio jingles are repeated at regular intervals. They want you to change your opinion and make you buy their products. That is the power of words.

I remember when I was living alone in a studio apartment. I would leave on the radio to keep me company. In the process, I ended up becoming familiar with all the jingles.

However, there was this particular powdered milk jingle that I heard so often that, whenever I needed milk, I would end up buying it, even though I didn't particularly like it.

Over a period of time, the jingle subconsciously influenced my buying

*"However deep
the grief, the eye
would
not shed blood."*

African Proverb

decision without me realising it. Words are powerful, whether we appreciate that fact or not.

In *Hung by the Tongue* (1979), Francis P. Martin tells a story which further illustrates the power of words:

“When I was a young boy about the age of 13 or 14, I was working with other young boys in a grocery store. On one particular morning, I asked one of the other boys how he was feeling. He said that he felt well and everything was chipper. I replied that he did not look well and that he may be a little pale. He looked all right but I thought I would just play a little joke on him. (This was a dreadful thing to do and I’ll not do it again.) Nevertheless, I persuaded the other boys to participate with me in the ‘gag’. In rotation, we would take turns telling this one fellow that he looked pale or asking, ‘Are you sure you feel all right?’ After a full morning of this, he was feeling quite bad, and by lunchtime he went home sick. He told the boss that he had to go home and go to bed due to the fact that he had become sick.”

You will eventually believe what you constantly hear, which was exactly what happened to this young fellow. He became sick just from the words he heard from his friends.

For those who live in Lagos in Nigeria, have you ever wondered why the *danfo* and *molue* drivers behave in an insane manner? I did myself and this is what I observed.

The standard greeting in the morning amongst these bus drivers is, “Were, ba wo ni?” (“Mad man, how are you?”) Is there any WONDER that they do all manner of insane things on our roads?

These drivers hear this statement so many times that they eventually start acting the part, in the process constituting a very real public nuisance.



*“A man who tests
the depth of a
river with
both legs must be
ready to swim.”*

African Proverb



*“A soldier must
be prepared for
either of two
things: victory or
defeat.”*

African Proverb

In the final analysis they have become ‘mad men’ behind the wheel harassing other road users. That is the power of words illustrated in a way that most of us Nigerians (especially Lagosians) can easily relate to.

Do any of the following expressions sound like a familiar radio jingle?

- *Country bad o!*
- *Nigeria don finish!*
- *Country don spoil!*
- *E be like say God curse dis country!*
- *Nothing dey work for Nigeria!*
- *Na corruption go kill Nigeria!*
- *Nothing good can come out of Nigeria!*
- *We can never be straight in our dealings!*
- *You can’t succeed in Nigeria without being a crook!*
- *Nigeria will not change in my own generation!*
- *Nigeria sucks!*

We use these phrases regularly and thoughtlessly about our country.

We must realise that words paint powerful pictures in our minds. Our reality is created by the words that we continually hear and the inevitable images they produce in our minds. We are where we are in our country today as a result of the words we have spoken over the years about our nation and about ourselves, reinforced by the words spoken about us by the international media.

Most of these words are predominantly negative in content. As a result, they end up producing negative pictures within us. We must change these pictures in order to realise our dreams and to achieve our visions and goals for a great new nation.

The only way to change the negative pictures is by deliberately changing the words we hear and the words we speak about our country and about ourselves.

When you are upset with the state of affairs in our country, please be careful what you say because what you say consistently is what we will eventually get.

Always look for the good in Nigeria. Always hear the good and talk about the good in relation to Nigeria and our expectations of her.



*“What you hear is what you see, what
you see is what you say and what you say
you will eventually become.”*

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*“A cockroach is
never innocent
in the
gathering of
fowls.”*

African Proverb



*"If one must blame the hawk for
wickedness, first blame the mother hen
for exposing her chicks to danger."*

AFRICAN PROVERB

We are All Guilty as Charged!



“The child who throws a stone into the market place forgets that it could land on its mother.”

AFRICAN PROVERB

“I like to broaden the responsibility beyond the leaders. So many of us are guilty, if not for commission or omission, for the things we have done and the things we have failed to do.”

PROFESSOR PAT UTOMI

“Leaders do not shape their people; it is the people that shape their leaders.”

FIDEL CASTRO

“When true change comes to our country, it will come from the inside. Our people will begin to see different. We will begin to understand that we are one nation under God.”

REV. CHRIS OKOTIE

(NEW YEAR'S MESSGAE, 1996)

Who is responsible for where we have found ourselves as a people and as a country?

*“No man succeeds
fully cheats a
prostitute for the
second time.”*

African Proverb



*“When a rat
mocks a cat,
know that
there is a hole
nearby.”*

African Proverb

Some of us may say, *“Well, I am not one of those who have contributed to Nigeria’s problems, neither have I given her a bad name by any of my actions.”*

This excuse is convenient for those who do not want to exercise leadership and take responsibility. However, neither does it solve any problem or change anything for the better.

If you are not guilty of causing any of Nigeria’s problems or tarnishing her image, what have you done to change the status quo?

- How have you challenged the situation in order to change it?
- What have you done to give Nigeria a positive image?
- What have you done to take responsibility for our nation and the destiny of our children?
- What little changes are you making that will cause the bigger change in Nigeria?

If you have not done anything, then you are definitely part of the problem.

You are just as much the problem as the people who caused it in the first place because you kept quiet, watched and did nothing to stop the decadence. You are guilty as charged!

It is all too easy to pass the buck and blame others; it seemingly relieves us of any sense of responsibility towards the destiny of our nation. It also helps to reduce the probability of any significant change and growth in Nigeria.

We keep blaming the colonialists, the West, the military, the elite, past and present governments etc., but the truth of the matter is that we are all guilty of where we are; we are all guilty of where we

find ourselves as a country - either by commission or omission.

John Stuart Mill once said, “*The worth of a state is the worth of the individuals composing it.*” We can see that in our society the Nigerian government is a reflection of the Nigerian people, so we are all responsible for the way Nigeria is. We are all responsible for the destiny of our nation.

Responsibility is your *response-ability*.

- How do you as a Nigerian citizen respond to the needs of Nigeria as your country?
- Are you *responding* or *reacting* to our country’s needs?
- How are you helping to create the great new Nigeria of our dreams?

My position on the business of taking responsibility is somewhat peculiar. First of all, I believe that if you have done nothing to change the status quo in Nigeria, you definitely share the guilt of where we are as a nation.

Secondly, if you are doing something to change the status quo (no matter how small or how big it may be), it is definitely a step in the right direction. Despite that, you are still, unfortunately, also guilty for our present state.

Thirdly, if you are doing something to change the status quo and you are empowering others to do something, that is really great and I have a high regard and respect for those of you that fall into this category. However, you, too, are still guilty of the decadence in the society. It is unfortunately the hard truth!



“You don’t fetch
 water from a
 stream
 to supply a riv-
 er.”

African Proverb



You may ask: How can I come to that kind of conclusion?

You see, whichever way you look at it, we are all guilty for where we are as a nation.

We will continue to be guilty until enough of us do enough in enough places - and empower enough people - thereby creating a critical mass of positive social change.

You may ask, “*What is enough, numerically speaking?*” I honestly don’t know but until Nigeria is obviously a great nation, we will all remain guilty as charged!

“That a tiger
killed an ante-
lope does
not make the
antelope a lazy
animal.”

African Proverb

*“When bad men combine, the good must
associate else they will fall one by one,
an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible
struggle.”*

EDMUND BURKE



*“You can only conquer your past by
focusing on your future.”*

MIKE MURDOCK

*“When a fowl
perches on a
rope, the fowl
will not be at
rest and the rope
will not rest ei-
ther.”*

African Proverb



*"It takes two healthy minds to
produce happy children."*

AFRICAN PROVERB

Identity Crisis



"It is precisely in the midst of a crisis that one must be most clear-headed."

ARTHUR A. NWANKWO

"It is far more important to know who you are than where you are going, for where you are going will certainly change as the world about you changes."

JAMES C. COLLINS AND JERRY I. PORRAS

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters, compared to what lies within us."

OLIVER WENDEL HOLMES

WHO ARE WE?

In *This House Has Fallen* (2000), Karl Maier states that, "Nigeria remains one of world's strategic nations. It is the biggest trading partner the United States has in Africa. It is the fifth largest supplier of oil to the U.S. market, where its low-sulfur Bonny Light crude is especially prized because it is easily refined into gasoline."

"As the world's tenth most populous country, Nigeria represents an inherently sizeable market that could provide trade opportunities for North American and European companies. It is a vast land stretch-

"An antelope can never be strong enough to carry the tusks of an elephant."

African Proverb



“However ugly a woman appears, she will have a suitor.”

African Proverb

ing from the dense mangrove swamps and tropical rain forests of the Atlantic coast to the spectacular rocky outcrops of the interior and the wide belt of savannah that finally melts into the arid rim of the Sahara desert. Its 110 million people are an extraordinary human potpourri of some three hundred ethnic groups that represent one out of six Africans. Nigeria is Africa’s equivalent to Brazil, India or Indonesia. It is the pivot point on which the continent turns.

“Designed by alien occupiers and abused by army rule for three quarters of its brief lifespan, the Nigerian state is like a battered and bruised elephant staggering toward an abyss with the ground crumbling under its feet. Should it fall, the impact will shake the rest of West Africa.

“Nigeria has proved to be by far the most confounding, frustrating and at the same time engaging place I have ever visited. It simply overwhelms the senses, one of those rare examples in which the sum of its parts is, at least to date, immensely greater than the whole. It is a work in progress, though one is never too sure whether it is being assembled or torn apart.”

Simply stated, we don’t add up.

In “Nigeria as Theatre of the Absurd?” Okah Ewah Edede describes Nigeria in a peculiar way. He claims that, “Nigeria is one polity that defies definition and comprehension. Many a pundit has tried to decipher the inherent mechanism that propels the contradictions of this multifaceted entity, but all the painstaking empirical pursuit of these brilliant minds have been entwined in utter puzzlement and bewilderment. The peculiarity of Nigeria beats understanding. (Sunday Sun, 26 February 2006)

In *How to Be a Nigerian* (1966), Peter Enahoro says, “Today, the conglomeration of tribes assembled compulsorily at the 1884 Berlin conference are assigned as Nigerians - for want of a substitute collective noun .”

Mr Humphrey Khoza, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Orion Technologies Nigeria Ltd., operator of the Lagos State Lottery, states in *The Sun* newspaper that, “I have found Nigerians to be very warm, very welcoming and very hardworking, which I did not expect and I don’t know why.”

Well, I am sure I know why Mr. Humphrey Khoza did not expect much from Nigerians. I believe it was the result of the bad publicity about Nigeria.

In *Nigeria: Giant of Africa* (1985), Peter Holmes states, “Nigeria is a country of great variety and much beauty. Nigeria is a country of immense wealth and potential. Nigeria is a vast country of many contrasts. In the far south a sandbar protects the coast from the Atlantic rollers. Behind the coast are the swamps, the creeks and the forests of tropical Africa. Move northwards, and the forest becomes wooded plain and savannah, punctuated by massive granite inselbergs. In the center there is a high cool plateau; and in the far north a fertile plain. Then the Sahara is approached.”

“Nigeria is large not just because of its size. From the whole African continent one person in every four is Nigerian. And the country’s population is ever growing. The energy, the vivacity and the variety of its people seem endless.”

In a report in *The Guardian*, Wyclef Jean said, “I have become very passionate about Nigeria. Nigerians are very vibrant and enterprising. First-hand knowledge has proved that all the negative



“The size of a
leaf doesn’t
determine its
usefulness.”

African Proverb



“The head that
is destined to be
a king
will be crowned
one day.”

African Proverb

things Americans were being bombarded with about Nigeria were all false.”

The Managing Director of Chi Nigeria Ltd., Mr Beri Vipul C. Beri, also in *The Guardian*, said that the impression people had of the country as a corrupt place scared him to the extent that he almost lost interest in coming. However, he said that he had a change of mind when he came to the country to see things for himself. It changed his perception. Beri stated that, *“Because I believe in unconventional philosophy, I found myself in Nigeria, only to see a different picture of hard working people and an affectionate society.”* This is what perception can do to brand-building.

One-time CEO of Guinness Nigeria, Keith Richards, remarked in *The Guardian*, *“Nigeria is a dynamic market with a highly talented film industry and we want to build on this and take entertainment to new frontiers.”*

“Indeed, Nigerians are sturdy people, they are tough, resilient, brilliant, hardworking, articulate, peace loving, highly religious and very hopeful. The only shortcoming observable is this; we have not realised that our destiny lies in us. We may have friends in New York, London and Tokyo; these friends can wish us well and nothing more. The earlier we accept that we are responsible for our future, the better for this nation,” asserts Professor Femi Odeyemi.

Michael Mor is an international businessman from Israel who has been in Nigeria for the last twenty years. This is what he has to say about Nigeria and Nigerians: *“Nigerians are cheerful people, they love music and dancing, they are also hospitable and friendly. I love the Nigerian food. The country is blessed with resources: people, land, water, oil and gas. There is a substantial stratum of educated young people.”*

Kunle Sanyaolu also writes that, *“Nigerians are among the best intellects, innovative, industrious and progressive of students and workers globally. That explains why they easily come top in settings of equal opportunities. It is no longer news that Nigerian brains in medicine, science, literature and arts are prime movers of the economy of many developed and industrialised countries today. It is on record that many of such Nigerians studied in Nigeria at least to a reasonable level, before venturing out.”* (*The Guardian on Sunday*, 31 July 2005, p. 51)



Transparency International says Nigeria is one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Others allege that Nigeria is the most religious country in the world and some others declare that Nigerians are the happiest people in the world.

Whatever is being said, the truth is we are not who we were at the birth of our nation as an independent state. We have evolved, grown and developed over the years into something incredibly dynamic in nature.

If we were to use just one word to describe Nigeria and its citizenry, which word would you come up with?

I am sure that some of the following words would cross your mind: Amazing, Distinctive, Extraordinary, Incredible, Remarkable, Striking, Unusual, Wonder, Impossible, Corrupt, Crooks, Con-Artist, Smart, Go-getters, Religious, Witty, Great, Friendly, Creative, Hospitable, Hardworking, Energetic, Happy, Dogged, Communal, Resilient, Resourceful etc.

Most of us know the words used by people in the international community to describe us. However, the issue at stake is not what they call us but what we call ourselves.

*“It’s when a cock
cannot afford a
gift for the fowl
that he resorts to
dancing before
her.”*

African Proverb



"If you are followed by a horde of flies, do not ask for the source of the smell."

African Proverb

How would we like people to describe us?

Write down your suggestions

[illegible]

There is an African Proverb that says, *"It is not what you call me but what I answer to which matters most."*

So, we must ask ourselves:

- What names have we as a nation been responding to?
- Do we like the names we've been responding to?
- If we don't, what can we do to change what we answer to as a nation and as a people?

I want to engage your mind as you continue to read. Please look for the answers to the above questions. As you approach the end of this book, we will be able to meet at some point and, hopefully, draw similar conclusions as to who we are and who we desire to be. This will help to permanently solve our present identity crisis.

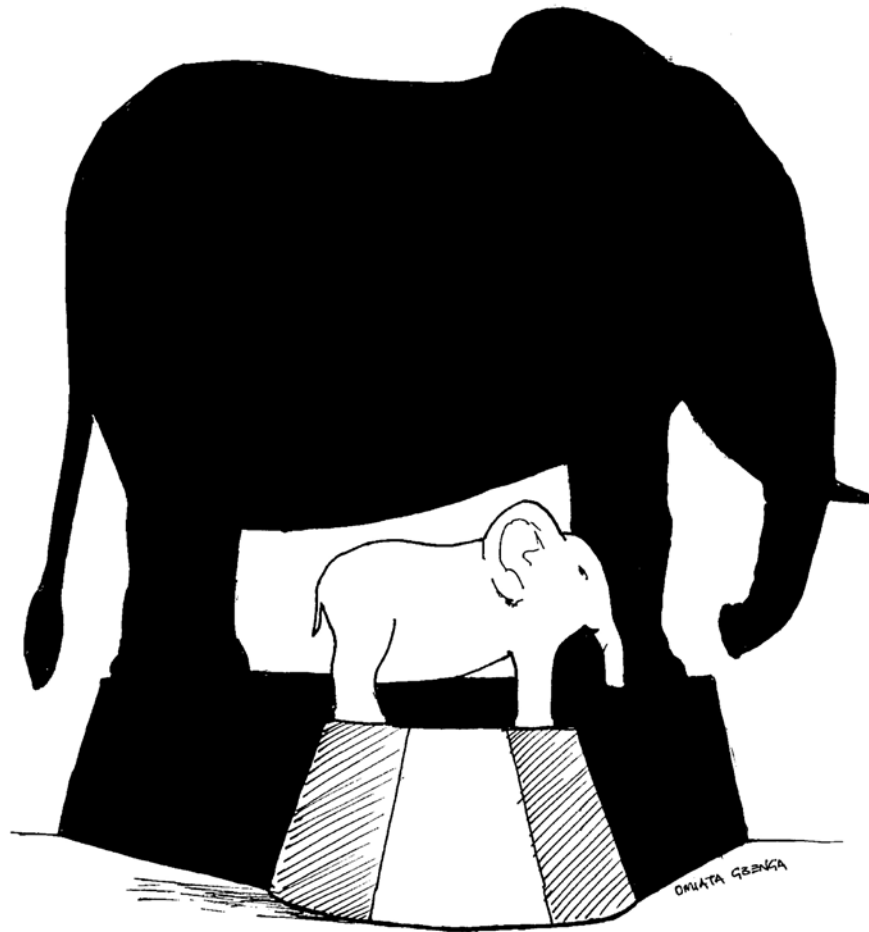


*“The answer to any problem ‘preexists’.
We need to ask the right questions
to reveal the answers.”*

JONAS SALK

*“The mouth
with an aching
tooth chews
with caution.”*

African Proverb



*“The young elephant does not need an oracle to know
that it will grow very big.”*

AFRICAN PROVERB

Why are We Here on Planet Earth?



"Purpose is the key to fulfillment. Where purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable."

MYLES MUNROE

"Stop looking at where you have been and start looking at where you are going."

MIKE MURDOCK

"Image building or branding of a nation entails not just spending money on media advertisement or sponsoring some occasional emotional stunts, but the totality of what the country represents. Branding is a reflection of the quality of government as well as character of the people."

THE GUARDIAN, 12 AUGUST 2004, EDITORIAL

An African-American by the name of George Washington Carver was faced with a product that could not be sold in the American market. This product was just grown for the sake of the soil so he decided to ask the question, *"My Creator, why did you make the peanut?"*

This simple question led him to discover 300 marketable products derived from the peanut.

"One does not pick his eyes the way he does his teeth."

African Proverb



*“However hard
it rains, it will
not change the
leopard’s skin.”*

African Proverb

I became extremely tired of complaining and hearing other Nigerians complain about Nigeria and our leaders, so I asked myself: *“What would I do if the future of Nigeria was dependent on me?”* I went a step further, following George Washington Carver’s example, and asked: *“My Creator, my God, why in the world did you create Nigeria and Nigerians? It is really a puzzle to me and many others.”*

This book contains some of the things I discovered about why God made Nigeria and Nigerians.

Over the next several years I dare believe that Nigeria will beat Carver’s record. We will discover and invent millions of Made-in-Nigeria marketable products from which the citizenry and the global community will benefit.

Nigeria is an oil field with many oil wells and large reserves. An oil well cannot be seen from the surface of the ground or the ocean; you have to drill it out. Like Nigeria’s hidden treasures, gold nuggets and our combined talents, skills, abilities or resources cannot be seen on the surface until they are drilled out and used.

All over Nigeria we need to drill deep to bring up the oil. Drilling undeniably entails hard work. However, I know that we are up to the task.

As we drill, these oil wells will prove to be the *wonder producers!*

How do I know that? Well, because our geologist, the Creator, said, *“I want Nigerians to be ‘wonder producers’. They have what it takes. And they have the capacity to produce at least 140 million barrels of wonders a day.”*

Metaphorically speaking, the drilling site is Nigeria, the drilling

crew are Nigerians and the drilling operation is everything we do as Nigerians to speed up and create wonders daily, which we will use to build the great new Nigeria of our dreams. I believe that every Nigerian can easily relate to that since Nigeria is an oil-producing country.

You may ask: Is it possible to build a great new Nigeria out of the rubble of chaos, crises and confusion? Personally, I have found out that when it is about Nigerians, anything can happen and, as they say, nothing is impossible in Nigeria!



*“You must constantly make distinctions
about yourself and you build your life
around your difference from others.”*

ANTHONY ROBBINS

*“One does not
enter a canoe
with both legs at
once.”*

African Proverb



*"The African farmer never
curses the land that gives
him big tubers of yam."*

AFRICAN PROVERB

Over Eighty Good and Interesting Things You Need to Know about Nigeria...and More



"Knowledge is the small part of ignorance that we arrange and classify."

AMBROSE BIERCE

"What man does not understand, he does not possess."

GOETHE

"One's own self is well hidden from one's own self: of all mines of treasure, one's own is the last to be dug up."

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

"Some people look for things that went wrong and try to fix them. I look for things that went right and try to build on them."

BOB STONE (QUOTED IN, TOM PETERS: RE-IMAGINE)

Years ago, I started looking for the good and interesting things about Nigeria. I looked through books, newspapers and magazines. I also asked a number of people. What I found interesting was that most people did not have any problem coming up with

"The person who loves the fragrance of flowers is at peace with nature."

African Proverb



Nigeria's bad report card. However, they found it a challenge to think of anything good.

The truth is that, as a nation, we have focused on the bad things for too long, thereby making it difficult for us to see the good. Focus blinds one. If you focus on the bad things, it blinds you to the good; likewise, if you focus on the good things, it blinds you to the bad. This also goes to illustrate the fact that we need to properly esteem ourselves as citizens of Nigeria.

A healthy self-esteem involves placing value on oneself, and having respect for oneself. All these things are based on a favourable opinion of ourselves which we get from the knowledge and understanding of ourselves.

In relation to our country, individual citizens can develop a healthy self-esteem by having a favourable opinion of Nigeria. That is what this chapter hopes to achieve. We must learn to find the good and praise it.

We can only become great by focusing on the good and building upon our strengths whilst protecting our weaknesses. For the last twenty years or more, we have focused too narrowly on our weaknesses and that in itself has sapped all our energy. However, if we start focusing on our strengths and opportunities as a nation, we will be energized, giving us the necessary power we need to galvanize us and achieve greatness.

What you do not know, you cannot understand, appreciate or celebrate! If we do not celebrate our nation, who will?

We can learn about focusing on our strengths from a Chinese table tennis mentor.

*“Though the
old man may be
toothless, he
does not lack
wisdom.”*

African Proverb

The mentor was once asked how he was able to consistently produce first-class players. This is what he said: *“I first try to unearth my protégé’s strengths. Then I build them up through intensive training designed to strengthen them.”* When he was asked: *“What do you do with the areas of weakness in your protégé’s game?”* he simply said, *“I ignore them by focusing on the player’s strengths. I discovered that, after a period of time, the protégé’s strengths become so strong they end up covering any area of weakness he may have.”* Our focus as citizens of Nigeria will determine our destiny as a nation.



Listed below are good and interesting things about Nigeria that we can start to focus on.

GENERAL

Did You Know That...

... The Third Mainland Bridge in Lagos is about 12km long?
(*Sunday Sun*, 15 October 2006)

... The River Niger is 4,171km long, making it the third longest river in Africa and the longest in West Africa? (<http://www.winetrance.com/riverlen-htm>)

Did You Know That...

... About sixty per cent of Nigeria’s land is arable all year round?

... Nigeria has some of the most fertile soil in Africa?
(Nwankwo, 1986)

... Nigeria ranks thirty-second in the world in terms of landmass? Nigeria’s landmass is 932,768 sq. kms. (www.mongabay/igapo/world-statistibarea.htm)

*“The hyena is
the greediest ani-
mal, yet it
forbids the meat
of its young
ones.”*

African Proverb



*“If the face can-
not bear to look
at the sun, it can
look at the moon
instead.”*

African Proverb

Did You Know That...

- ... Nigerians speak about 500 different languages and dialects?
- ... Nigeria has over 250 ethnic groups?
- ... At birth, Nigeria ranked among the greatest and important agricultural countries in the world, occupying the fortieth position on the list of rich countries? (*Brand Faces*, No. 7, October 2002: “Marketing Brand Nigeria with PR”)
- ... Mrs Victoria Gowon delivered her first child at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital when her husband, Gen. Yakubu Gowon, was head of state? (*The Guardian*, 2 October 2006, p. 12)
- ... Nigeria unveiled the world’s longest wrapper at the second edition of the Abuja carnival held between 23 and 26 November 2006? The wrapper was made of 57 yards of locally made ‘Ankara’ material. It was worn by Ambassador David Ogbarakpo. He tied it around his waist and the overflow was carried by about ten young men. (<http://www.tribune.com.ng/11122006/features.html>)

Did You Know That...

- ... At independence the Nigerian pound was equivalent to one British pound and also equivalent to about four American dollars?
- ... In the 1960s and early 1970s, the per capita income in Nigeria was over US\$2000? (*The Guardian*, 11 June 2005, p. 14)

Did You Know That...

- ... Three out of every five cars in Nigeria are Mercedes Benz? (Onyeani, 2000)

... Nigeria is roughly twice the size of France? (Nwankwo, 1986)

... In the history of our nation there was a time when Nigeria could afford anything; during that period the federal government paid the salaries of public servants in a poor Caribbean nation? (*Daily Sun*, 6 July 2005) On several occasions Nigeria has also paid full salaries for other African countries such as Benin Republic. (Ali, 1985)



Did You Know That...

... The Redeemed Christian Church of God has the most branches of any Christian denomination in Africa? It is also one of the fastest growing churches in North America.



... The Nigerian Anglican Church is Africa's largest Anglican Church with an estimated 17.5 million members? (*The Guardian*, 5 July 2006, p. 2)

... Nigeria ranks second to the US in free Bible distribution in the world? In Africa, Nigeria is the largest network distributor of the Holy Bible. (*The Guardian*, 15 February 2006)

... Vehicular traffic in the country shot up from a mere 1.2 million in 1975 to about eight million in 2003? (*The Punch*, 2 August 2006, p. 15)

Did You Know That...

... Nigeria broke the world record (and created a new one) in the Guinness Book of World Records for the longest dance party at 53 hours 50 minutes? It was set at the Nokia/Silverbird Danceathon by Kafayat Shafau and the Zebra Team. The former world record was 52 hours 3 minutes. (*The Guardian*, 6 October 2006, p. 31)

*“No matter how
many heads are
in the market
place, one will
not mistake his
mother’s head for
another.”*

African Proverb



“A man who
sends a message
by the hand of
a fool must be
willing to cut off
his own feet.”

African Proverb

... Not so long ago, the University College Hospital, Ibadan was reputed as the best centre for the treatment of cancer in Africa? (*The Guardian*, October 2, 2006, editorial)

Did You Know That...

... Nine Nigerian banks have been included in the top 1000 banks in the world by a London-based magazine? (*The Guardian*, 28 July 2006, editorial)

... Nigeria has become the third largest ATM market in Africa? (*Daily Sun*, 26 April 2006, p. 19)

... According to the International Telecommunications Union, Nigeria's telecommunications sector is the fastest growing in the world? (*Daily Sun*, 21 October 2005, p. 9)

... Nigerians consume between forty and fifty million scratch cards monthly? (*Daily Sun*, 23 June 2006, p. 47)

... Nigeria's telephone subscriber base has hit thirty million? Interestingly, twenty-nine million got theirs in the last four years. (*The Guardian*, 18 October 2006, p. 17)

... A city in Nigeria - Jos - had electric lights before London? Hydroelectric power was developed by the mining companies in the Jos area for their homes. (Howard F. Dowdell: *It Just Happened to Happen*)

... Nigeria has won several awards for the beauty of its stamps? (*ThisDay on Sunday*, 5 February 2006, p. 55)

Did You Know That...

- ... Less than two years ago Nigeria was rated the most religious country in the world by a UK-based organisation?
- ... In 2003, UK's New Scientist magazine published a report that said Nigerians were the happiest people in the world?

SPORTS

Did you know that...

- ... Nigeria was the first country in the world to win the Under-17 football World Cup in China?
- ... Nigeria was the first African country to win an Olympic gold medal in football?
- ... Nigeria was the first African country to win a world title in boxing?

Did You Know That...

- ... Nigeria is one of the countries with the highest number of football clubs in the world?
- ... Nigeria is one of the highest exporters of footballers in the world?

THE ECONOMY AND TRADE

Did You Know That...

- ... Nigeria's foreign direct investment position has one of the highest returns on investments in real dollar terms? (*The Guardian*, 13 December 2006, p. 6)



*“A goat that is
jointly owned
by many persons
will die of
hunger.”*

African Proverb



“When one
accepts an idol,
he accepts all
that it takes to
worship it.”

African Proverb

... Nigerians abroad remit about \$5 billion per annum to their fatherland? (*The Guardian*, 2 August 2006, p. 16)

... Nigeria was among the top twenty remittance-recipient countries in 2004? (*The Punch*, 7 December 2005, p. 3)

... Nigeria is the United States’ biggest trading partner in Africa? (Maier, 2000)

... Nigeria is one of France’s biggest trading partners in Africa?

... Nigeria is now India’s largest trading partner in Africa? In 2004, India imported \$3.6 billion worth of goods, mostly crude oil. (*The Guardian on Sunday*, 28 August 2005, p. 60)

Did You Know That...

... The Computer Village in Ikeja, Lagos is believed to be the largest ICT accessories centre in Africa? (*The Punch*, 6 December 2006, p. 11)

... Nigeria is the world’s largest producer of cassava?

... The prognosis by Goldman Sachs is that Nigeria might become a top twenty economy in twenty years (i.e. by 2025)? (<http://nigeriaworld.com/feature/publication/peterside/032906.html>)

... Nigeria is also the world’s largest consumer of cassava? (*The Guardian*, 17 August 2005, p. 65)

... Nigeria accounts for over fifty per cent of West Africa’s GDP? (GlobalInsight, <http://www.era.doc.gov/emeu/cabs/ECOWAS/Tables.html>)

- ... The Bonga Single Point Mooring Buoy fabricated and installed by Nigerdock is the largest in the world? (*Daily Sun*, 12 January 2006, p. 25)
- ... A foam company in Nigeria – Mouka Foam - has the largest plant in West Africa? (*Daily Sun*, 23 February 2006, p. 31)
- ... It is believed that Nigerians hold an estimated \$170 billion in foreign countries? (*Daily Sun*, 18 October 2005, p. 9)



Did You Know That...

- ... Nigeria currently has the highest foreign reserves in Africa? (*The Guardian*, 20 July 2005, p. 65)
- ... Nigeria's oil exports accounted for over ninety-nine per cent of its total export to the United States? (2001 figures)
- ... Forty years ago, Nigeria was the world's largest producer of palm oil and groundnuts? (*Sunday Sun*, 4 September 2005, p. 16)

Did You Know That...

- ... When the United Nigerian Textiles Plc started operations fifteen years ago, its workforce was 350,000. Today, the company has pruned the workforce to 20,000? (*The Guardian*, 4 September 2005, p. 57)

Did You Know That...

- ... The Nigerian Stock Exchange was one of the most profitable stock exchanges in the world in 2003? And it is still one of the most profitable. (Source: 2003 Year Review and Outlook Report by FSDH/CTSL Research)

"A river that has
 many sources can
 never run dry."

African Proverb



“When you buy
a cloth for a lazy
man you must
also dye it for
him.”

African Proverb

... Some economists have argued that most poor countries like Nigeria will experience a reversal of their fortunes if only they can convince their citizens to invest at home rather than abroad? (*‘Why Have Savings and Investments Remained Low in Nigeria?’ Business Times*, 1-6 April 2002, p. 39)

MINERAL RESOURCES

Did You Know That...

... Every state in Nigeria has at least one or more different types of mineral resources? (*The Punch*, 17 June 2005, pp. 1 & 8)

... Nigeria happens to have the highest variety of mineral resources per square kilometre in the world?

... Nigeria has one of the highest grades of bitumen in the world? A 120-kilometre belt of bituminous sands, stretching from Ogun to Edo states, has deposits of 42 billion barrels, which is the second largest in the world. (*The Punch*, 16 November 2005, p. 22)

Did You Know That...

... Nigeria has some of the world’s richest petroleum deposits?

... Nigeria is the sixth largest producer of crude oil in the world and the largest in Africa? ([http://www.ein.doe.gov/emem/cabs/topworld tables 1-2. html](http://www.ein.doe.gov/emem/cabs/topworld%20tables%201-2.html))

... Nigeria has proven reserves of oil amounting to about 32 billion barrels, which are enough to last for thirty-seven years at the current rate of production? (NEEDS: *Nigeria National Planning Commission*, 2004 Handbook, p. 16)

Did You Know That...

- ... About half of Nigeria's crude oil production is exported to the United States?
- ... Shell Petroleum Development Company controls more than 50 per cent of the oil produced by Nigeria? (Onyeani, 2000)
- ... Nigeria has the seventh largest gas reserves in the world? (*Oil & Gas Journal*, vol. 103, no. 47, 19 December 2005)
- ... Nigeria has the fifth largest gas reserves in OPEC? (*ibid*)
- ... Nigeria's proven natural gas reserves in the Niger Delta area are estimated at approximately 158 trillion standard cubic feet (with substantially more reserves in the deep water off-shore basin)?



Did You Know That...

- ... Nigeria's gas reserves are expected to last over 110 years? (NEEDS: *Nigeria National Planning Commission*, 2004 Handbook, p. 16)
- ... Nigeria's liquefied natural gas plant is the second largest in the world?

HUMAN RESOURCES

Did You Know That...

- ... Nigerians are the most optimistic set of people in the world? (*The Punch*, 17 October 2006, p. 15)
- ... Nigeria is Africa's largest exporter of human capital?
- ... Nigeria is Africa's largest exporter of medical doctors?

“When a child
has eaten his fill,
he dances for the
stump on the
farm.”

African Proverb



“If the man that
has the matchet
(cutlass) has good
sense, the match-
et will fall in the
right place.”

African Proverb

... According to a WHO report, Nigerians account for one out of every five black doctors in the United Kingdom? (*The Guardian*, 28 June 2005)

... Nigerians also account for one out of every ten black doctors in the United States? (*ibid*)

... Nigerian doctors also dominate the Middle East?

... Nigerians top the list of registered nurses in the United Kingdom?

... There are about 25,000 Nigerian medical doctors in North America? (*ThisDay*, vol. 11, no. 4074, p. 20)

Did You Know That...

... The number of Nigerians in Britain is about two million with a substantial asset base of about £94 billion?

... According to a recent US report, Nigeria is the ninth most populous country in the world? It is also the only African nation in the top ten list of most populous nations?

... There are about 185,000 Nigerian ICT professionals in North America (*ThisDay*, vol. 11, no. 4074, p. 20)

Did You Know That...

... Nigeria has the highest number of doctorate degree holders in Africa? (<http://nigeriaworld.com/feature/publication/peterside/082906.html>)

... Lagos is estimated to be the seventh largest city in the world with about 13.5 million people? It is projected to become the third largest city before 2025 with about twenty-five million people. (*The Punch*, 5 December 2005, p. 16)

- ... Nigeria will be the fourth most populous country in the world by the year 2050? According to the 2006 World Population Data Sheet, Nigeria's population is to shoot up to 299 million in 2050. (*The Punch*, 28 August 2006, p. 3)
- ... There are about twenty million Nigerians living in different parts of the world? (*The Guardian*, 28 July 2006, p. 12)
- ... There are over one million Nigerians in the United States? This makes them the second largest in the Diaspora besides people from the United Kingdom. (*The Punch*, 15 September 2006, p. 2)
- ... About seventy-five per cent of the population of Nigeria is under thirty years of age? (<http://www.population.org/resources/researchcommentaries/pdfs/research> - vol. 10 - Nov 06-pdf)

Did You Know That...

- ... One in every six black people in the world is a Nigerian? (NEEDS: *National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy*, *National Planning Commission*, 2004 Handbook)

Did You Know That...

- ... About one out of every four Africans is a Nigerian?
- ... Nigeria has some of the most highly qualified professionals in Africa?
- ... One third of black immigrants to the US are Nigerians?
- ... Nigeria has the highest number of twins in the world? (www.survivingtwins.com/page/2/)



“The first person to fall into a pit gives timely warning to others coming behind him.”

African Proverb



“Only the snail
that wants to
commit suicide
eats salt.”

African Proverb

... Nigeria has the highest number of multiple births in the world? (www.twinsnetwork.com)

... Over fifty per cent of West Africans are Nigerians? (<http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa>)

... The Nigerian government employs over two million people? (NESG: *Economic Indicators* - July-September, 2001, p. 65)

... A Nigerian was the first black man in American history to be honoured with the prestigious title of distinguished professor in the field of engineering? His name is Professor Bart Nnaji and he was only thirty-seven years of age when he received the title in 1993. He is a world renowned robotics engineer. (*The Guardian*, 7 August 2006, p. 65)

... The first African architect to have his work exhibited in the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago is a Nigerian? His name is Anthony Akindele. (*Daily Sun*, 6 March 2006, p. 31)

... A Nigerian at the age of twenty-five was the first African to be appointed a lecturer on tenured position (full-time) at the Faculty of Law, University of Oxford? His name is Professor Fidelis Oditah. (*The Guardian*, 11 September 2006, p. 28)

Did You Know That...

... A Nigerian-trained doctor has been named a top heart surgeon among about 60,000 based in the New York region (i.e. according to the Castle Connolly Medical Guide, a leading yearly publication of distinguished US doctors in the New York and Florida regions)? His name is Dr. Olakunle Akinboboye. He is a leading specialist in cardiovascular diseases. (*The Guardian*, 24 December 2005, p. 3)

- ... Nigeria produced the first African Doctor of Science by academic work (ie not honorary) in the person of Professor Ayodele Awojobi?
- ... A Nigerian, Professor Chike Obi, solved a 300-year-old mathematical equation manually, which nobody had been able to do without the aid of a computer?
- ... A Nigerian was the first black president of the World Court in the person of Dr. T. O. Elias?
- ... The first chief justice of Uganda was a Nigerian in the person of Sir Udo Udoma? He also drafted that country's constitution.
- ... Nigeria was the first African country to produce a Miss World in the person of Agbani Darego?

Did You Know That...

- ... The Nigerian-born teenager, Helen Oyeyemi, wrote a bestselling book titled *The Icarus Girl*?
- ... The novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, was written by a Nigerian? The author's name is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. She was the 2003 winner of the J. M. Coetzee Prize and also winner of the 2004 Hurston-Wright's Prize for Black Fiction.



*“You do not
teach the parts of
a forest to
an old gorilla.”*

African Proverb



*“The culture has
no business with
the barber.”*

African Proverb

EDUCATION

Did You Know That...

... Nigeria's Kaduna Polytechnic is considered the biggest polytechnic of its kind in West Africa? (*Daily Sun*, 26 September 2005, p. 19)

... Nigeria has the largest university in Africa? That is Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Did You Know That...

... A Nigerian university won a global award involving 500 universities? University of Lagos' 103.1 FM radio station was adjudged the world's best in the outreach and community relations category as, “a creative method to promote an initiative that benefits the institution, its students and the wider community”. The competition was organised by the Association of Commonwealth Universities. (*The Guardian*, 7 August 2006, back page)

... There are about twenty million Nigerian children in primary school? (Universal Basic Education Commission, Abuja, 2005)

... There are about 5.4 million Nigerian youths in secondary schools? (*ibid*)

... About 800,000 to one million candidates take the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board examinations annually? (*ibid*)

... Nigeria has the highest number of universities in Africa? (National Universities Commission, 2005)

... Nigeria produces over 200,000 graduates annually? (*Banks Come under Fire*, *The Guardian*, 3 August 2005, p. 29)

... In 2001, over one million students registered for the West African School Certificate ('O' level) examination? (NESG: *Economic Indicators* - October-December 2001)

TOURISM AND ENTERTAINMENT

Did You Know That...

... The cable car system in Obudu in Cross River State has the longest single span in the world? (*The Guardian*, 27 October 2006, p. 33)

... Nigeria is ranked amongst the top forty tourism spenders? Nigeria is ranked thirty-ninth in tourism expenditure. We spend over \$2 billion annually in external trips, while we earn less than \$200 million annually from tourism (*Travelers* 2001).

... Nigerians are the second most travelled people in Africa after South Africans?

... Nigeria's Avis Rent-a-Car is the best Avis franchise in Africa? (*Travelers* 2001)

Did You Know That...

... Lagos is presently the seventh most populous city in the world and is more populous than London? And that it is also one of the three fastest growing cities in the world?

... According to the UN, Lagos is expected to become a mega-city in 2015? It is expected to be the world's fifth most populous



*"If the yam tuber
escapes the flood
at the farm, it
will meet another
one inside the
cooking pot."*

African Proverb



“Even the rough
looking madman
has relatives; you
will see them
when he dies.”

African Proverb

urban centre by 2015 with a population of about twenty-three million. (*The Guardian on Sunday*, 17 July 2005, p. 16)

Did You Know That...

... The Lagos-London route is one of the most profitable in the world? (Nick Fadugba, publisher of *African Aviation*, in an interview on Channels TV about the Bellview plane crash in 2005)

... Nigeria is one of British Airways’ most profitable destinations in the world?

... Yankari National Park is the nation’s first wildlife conservation centre, with the single largest elephant concentration site in West Africa? It has over 200 elephants. (*Nigerian National Parks Information Brochure*)

... The Shaushau and Ampara iron smelting works (in Yankari National Park) have about sixty standing shaft furnaces, which are believed to be the largest historical industrial complexes of their kind in the West African sub-region? (*Nigeria National Parks Information Brochure*)

Did You Know That...

... Over 650 films are produced in Nigeria each year? (*Africa Film and TV Bulletin*, 12 June 2001)

... In 2000, the movie industry in Nigeria generated a turnover of \$65 million? (*Travelers*, vol. 6, no. 8, 2001)

... Nigeria is considered to be the third largest movie-producing nation in the world after America and India, respectively? (*ThisDay on Sunday*, 16 July 2006 p. 94)

Did You Know That...

... Nigeria exported N45 billion worth of films in thirteen years (1992-2005)? (*The Guardian on Sunday*, 9 October 2005, p. 6)

... Nigeria has one of the highest numbers of TV and radio stations in Africa?

SOME OF OUR POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES AS A PEOPLE

Listed below are some of our positive attributes as Nigerians:

We are:

- Optimistic and enthusiastic
- Hospitable, friendly and warm
- Resilient and hardworking
- Creative, energetic and lively
- Fun-loving, outgoing and easy going
- Generous, big hearted and kind-hearted
- Resolute and dogged
- Resourceful
- Determined
- Competitive
- Appreciative
- Confident, vigorous and outspoken
- Respectful
- Forgiving
- God-centred

We have:

- A strong attachment to family (especially children) and community
- The ability to celebrate life in almost everything we do
- A passion for life
- An indomitable spirit
- A great sense of humour



*“The person
who lives in a
thatched house
does not play
with fire.”*

African Proverb



- A penchant for humorous play on words
- A gift for rhythm and music
- An instinctive understanding of the power of the spirit world; we believe in the spiritual nature of reality

It is crucial that we know what our positive attributes are as a people in order to be able to esteem ourselves properly. It is said that a person who has a problem accepting compliments evidently has a self-esteem problem. As a people, we have had a great problem accepting anything positive about ourselves. We are like the cynic who, when he smells a lovely flower, looks around for a coffin.

It is vital that we esteem ourselves highly as citizens of Nigeria. Nobody can do it for us; it is our sole responsibility and the only way to psyche ourselves up to achieve greatness.

The only way for us to esteem ourselves properly is for us to appreciate and build upon our strengths, assets and positive attributes.

As Nigerian citizens, we will only flourish in an atmosphere of praise. We must learn to appreciate ourselves. We also need to learn to appreciate and praise our fellow Nigerians.

Ellen McGrath, Ph. D, states that, *“Appreciation is one of the basic human needs. We need to feel known, acknowledged, valued. It’s what keeps us going. Appreciation boosts our spirits, builds our self-esteem and makes us feel good about ourselves and the people we love.”* (December 1985 issue of *Red Book*)

As Nigerian citizens, we obviously have a great need to feel valued, appreciated and respected by others. Let’s start to appreciate one another (and our nation) by identifying what is praiseworthy

“To defeat hunger you have to farm, not beg.”

African Proverb

in us, in other Nigerians and in Nigeria generally. Focusing on these things will build up our self-esteem and self-confidence as Nigerian citizens. This chapter has listed so many things that we can now focus on.

As a people and as a nation, we need continuous praise and appreciation on the road to greatness and the Promised Land of a new Nigeria.

OTHER INTERESTING THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT AFRICA

Did You Know That...

- ... Fifty per cent of the world's gold is in Africa? (*The Guardian on Sunday*, 28 August 2005, p. 11)
- ... Ninety-five per cent of the world's diamond is in Africa? (*ibid*)
- ... Ninety-five per cent of the world's platinum is in Africa? (*ibid*)
- ... Africa has 25,000 kilometres of rivers?
- ... Africa has more than a third of the potential hydroelectric power in the world, about 259 million horsepower more than that of Europe, North and South America, and Australia combined? (Coughlan, 1962)
- ... According to Life World Library: Tropical Africa, Africa has some of the world's loveliest, most peculiar and most spectacular scenery?



*“No one can
make the crab to
walk erect.”*

African Proverb



“It is foolish for
someone on top
of a tree to abuse
the air.”

African Proverb

SOME MORE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE BLACK RACE

Did You Know That...

... The first person to die in the American Revolution that freed the United States from British oppression was a black seaman by the name of Crispus Attucks? (James P. Shenton, Judith R. Benson and Robert E. Jakoubek (1981): *These United States*, p. 78)

... The first successful heart operation in America was performed by a black physician named Dr. Daniel Hale Williams? {*The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (1998), p. 327}

... The physician who was for the most part responsible for separating blood plasma and storing it in large quantities was a black man named Dr. Charles Drew? The procedure saved thousands of lives during World War Two and enabled many important advances in post-war medicine. (*ibid*)

... George Washington Carver's research in agricultural products helped to revive the economy of the southern United States? He was also a black man. (*ibid*)

... A black man, Norbert Rillieux, invented the evaporating pan that revolutionised the process of sugar refining? (*ibid*)

... The multimillion dollar United Shoe Machinery Company was developed from the shoe lasting machine which was invented by a black man from Dutch Guyana in the nineteenth century? His name was Jan Matzeliger. (*ibid*)

... Granville T. Woods' many patents helped to speed the growth and improvement of the railroads in the early twentieth century? He was an expert in electric motors and was also a black man.
(*ibid*)

“Time was when the worth of Nigerian citizenship used to be measured in gold; time was when Nigerian citizenship was coveted and treasured by other African nationals.

“Time was when Nigeria was everything other African nationals ever wanted.

“Time was when Nigerians used to travel abroad only to shop and return proudly back to their country and not as economic migrants. It is not too late in the day to reclaim those glorious days.”

EKERETE UDO

(THE GUARDIAN, 11 SEPTEMBER 2006, P. 65)



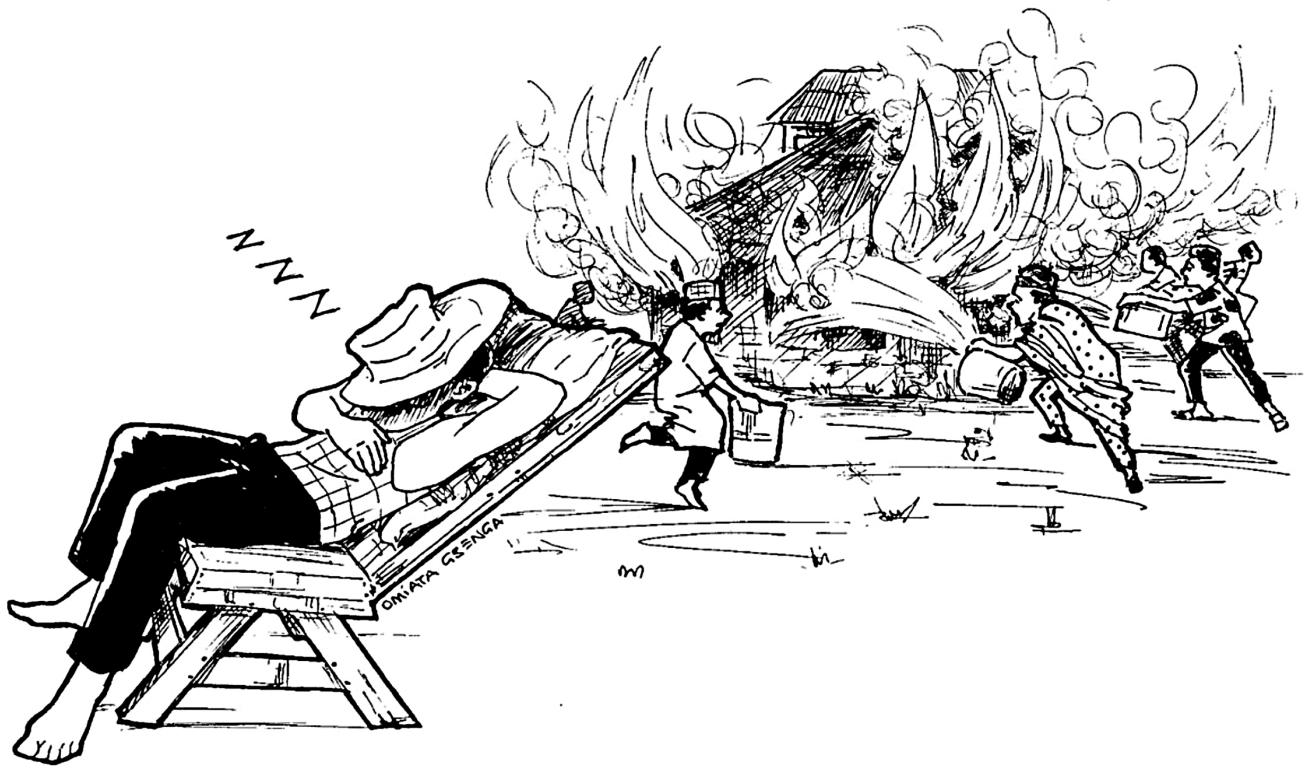
*“No one consults
an oracle on why
he enjoys good
health.”*

African Proverb

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

*“Everyone thinks of changing
humanity and no one ever thinks of
changing himself.”*

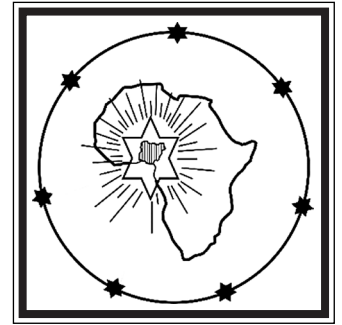
LEO TOLSTOY



*“When a child is forgotten in the midst
of feasting elders, he coughs to remind
them of his presence.”*

AFRICAN PROVERB

Taking Responsibility



“In Germany, they first came for the communists. And I did not speak up because I wasn’t a communist.

Then they came for the Jews. And I did not speak up because I wasn’t a Jew.

Then they came for the trade unionists. And I did not speak up because I wasn’t a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Catholics. And I did not speak up because I was a protestant.

Then they came for me. And by that time no one was left to speak up.”

MARTIN NIEMOELLER

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience but where he stands at times of challenge and discovery.”

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

“A dog may reject its food but it will not allow the chicken to play with it.”

African Proverb



"I learned I was not, as most Africans believed, the victim of my circumstances but the master of them."

LEGSON KAYIRA

We need to start taking responsibility for our society and the problems we face. If we don't, who will?

We must understand that every country in the world has different problems: terrorism, war, famine, natural disasters, etc. Somehow, they try to solve them without passing the buck.

If we don't take responsibility for our problems, the truth is that nobody else can or will.

Nigeria as a nation has been plagued with all kinds of crises, including:

- Killing of about eight policemen in Odi community, Bayelsa State
- Reprisal for the killings, which ended in the massacre of the people of Odi by armed soldiers
- Jukun and Tiv ethnic crisis
- Inter-ethnic clashes between the Hausa residents and the Yoruba indigenes in Shagamu and the reprisals in Kano
- Kaduna and Kano religious riots
- Reprisals of the religious riots in the South-East
- Yelwa indigene/settlers crisis
- Reprisals of the Yelwa crisis in Kano
- Ijaw/Itsekiri/Urhobo communal predicament
- Oodu'a People's Congress disturbances in various communities in Lagos
- Bauchi religious intolerance
- Resource control dilemma
- Abduction of foreign oil workers in the Niger Delta

*"When the owl
says it is afraid
of the eyes of its
young ones, it
forgets that it
gave birth to
them."*

African Proverb

- Blowing up of oil pipelines in the Niger Delta
- Danish anti-Islamic cartoon which sparked off religious killings in Maiduguri and some other parts of the North
- Reprisals of Danish cartoon religious killings in some parts of the South-East
- Bellview and Sosoliso plane crashes
- Ikeja accidental bomb blasts

In all these, thousands of lives were lost, property worth billions was destroyed, and thousands of people were rendered homeless.

It was interesting to observe the reaction, after each of these crises, of the average Nigerian living outside the affected areas. The general attitude was more or less that of:

- *It is not my problem!*
- *There is nothing I can do about it!*
- *It is none of my business!*
- *I have enough problems of my own to worry about!*

Our general reaction as citizens of this country to the crises in various parts of Nigeria has not been that of collective outrage.

It's almost as if our emotions have become numb as a result of the overwhelming challenges we face daily. To relieve our guilt, we say to ourselves: "I really cannot do anything about all these crises." On the other hand, we may even say, apathetically, "If the crisis is not happening where I live or in my home state where I have relations, then it really is not my concern."

We have become unshockable, which is unfortunate.

Meanwhile, we forget that a crisis can erupt anywhere in today's world, even in places that were once known to be peaceful, as we recently saw in



*"The young
snake inherits
poison from its
parents."*

African Proverb



*“A man who
steals a town
crier’s drum
will not know
where to play it.”*

African Proverb

the United States - 9/11 and London - 7/7. We have something to learn from the Americans in being our brother’s keeper in times of crisis. The love and service to mankind displayed by Americans after the 9/11 attacks were the expression of unparalleled patriotism.

This indifference to our crises must of necessity change. It is important for us to realise that we cannot afford not to be our brother’s keeper as fellow citizens of this great nation.

We have to understand that wherever the crisis may occur, it is still a part of Nigeria and Nigeria happens to be our country and therefore our collective responsibility.

Most of the corrupt people in our country - 419ers and drug traffickers - are not Americans or Italians or even Ghanaians; they are full-blooded Nigerians; our very own people.

Our leaders, who we love to complain about, also happen to be Nigerians. All these people are a microcosm of the larger Nigerian society; they are a part of the whole. They are Nigerian citizens and, therefore, family.

In most families, each member takes responsibility for the others. They cooperate to solve internal disagreements. They don’t expose one another unnecessarily. They also go the extra mile to protect one another.

As Nigerians, we all know that it is in bad taste for a guest to complain about anything in the presence of the host.

Taking this illustration further, it would be inconceivable for the host to join his guest in criticizing his wife’s food, even if it was tasteless. You wouldn’t be so thoughtless; instead, you would de-

send your wife and let your guest know you find such criticism offensive.

Interestingly, we would find that, as Nigerians, we act like the host who takes the side of his guest in criticising his wife's cooking.

I, personally, have not been able to understand how foreigners can complain and we, in turn, join them in castigating our country, our people and our leaders. I just don't understand it! We happen to be their host.

And they have no right whatsoever to criticise our country.

Most foreigners simply won't tolerate other nationals saying negative things about their country, much less castigating their leaders and people. They just won't put up with it.

It is discourteous, disrespectful and ill-mannered for any foreigner living in any country to criticise his host nation. Foreign nationals have consistently said uncomplimentary things about Nigeria to Nigerians with no apology whatsoever. (One cannot but wonder why most of them continue to remain here.) The only reason they continue to do this is because we tolerate and even condone it.

The next time you have the opportunity to meet a foreigner, I would like you to please try out this experiment. If possible try it out first on an American. Their reaction to this experiment will be much more apparent.

The experiment is to spend the first five minutes making negative, disparaging and defamatory statements about their country



*"It is not one
road that leads
to the market."*

African Proverb



*“It is the one
who chases after
a chicken
that falls, not the
chicken.”*

African Proverb

and then wait for their response. I can assure you that the person will not take kindly to it. In fact, in the process you would probably have made an enemy for life.

Here is a true story to buttress my point. Some years back a friend of mine jokingly told an American diplomat living in Nigeria that God built His BQ (boys’ quarters) in the United States and then moved over to Nigeria to build His mansion.

This was supposed to be a joke but the diplomat did not consider it at all funny. Needless to say, from the time my friend made that statement until the diplomat left the country, they ceased to be on speaking terms.

The American diplomat took offence and stopped talking to him. He took his statement personally. As far as he was concerned, it was an insult to his country and, therefore, to his person.

This anecdote illustrates how passionate Americans are about their country and anything American. It also shows how they treat people who dare to disrespect or insult their motherland. We need to take a cue from them and learn what patriotism is all about.

From now on, please make it a point of duty not to tolerate any foreigner who dares to make uncomplimentary statements about Nigeria. If any foreigner disparages Nigeria around you, take it up with that person and make it personal. Make such a big issue out of it so that you will be the last Nigerian that they will ever dare to say such things to!

Quite a number of us also complain incessantly about Nigeria to each other. In *How to Be a Nigerian* (1966), Peter Enahoro

aptly calls it grumbling: *“Nigerians are a nation of good grumblers. This should not be mistaken for the dull, inarticulate sounds, the humdrum murmur, the faintly rumbling growls or those cringing complaints with which the word is often associated. I mean the full-blooded, roaring type, with its high discourtesy and downright incivility. Grumbling is an art and everyday in the street corners, in market places, large mummies with marathon stamina, lay new records at grumbling.”*

He could hardly have described it better. And, believe it or not, he wrote this forty years ago!

As a people, we complai....n! It is incredible! We relish it; we enjoy it. We complain for the sake of complaining. As we say, *“Just to flow gist.”* We complain to blame others, especially government. We complain to justify our present predicament. We complain to appease our consciences for doing nothing.

Whining and complaining about the Nigerian problem is, without doubt, an unprofitable venture. It wears people out and saps creative energy. It leaves people drained, disappointed and depressed. It makes us hopeless and miserable.

To take responsibility for the Nigerian predicament, we must acquire the attitude of always looking for the good, seeing the good, hearing the good and talking about the good things happening in our nation. We need to educate both ourselves and foreigners about the positive aspects of Nigeria and the interesting things about our nation.

The next time someone grumbles about Nigeria, politely ask them, *“What are you doing to change it?”* If they are unable to give you a reasonable answer, suggest the following:



*“The eagle flying
high in the sky
does not know
that those on the
ground are look-
ing at it.”*

African Proverb



- *Stop complaining*
- *Change starts with doing the little things you can do where you are*
- *Always do the right thing*
- *Exercise leadership*
- *Take responsibility where you are*

Additionally, you can also tell the person:

- *You can either complain or you can do something about it, which will it be?*
- *You can watch as our country goes to the dogs or you can take responsibility and do something about it*

We must learn to exercise leadership by taking responsibility for the problems in our various communities, whilst providing - and implementing - solutions.

Changing the negative picture of the Nigeria that we see in our mind's eye is also part of taking responsibility for our destiny. When most of us think about Nigeria, the first thing that comes to mind is corruption. We have to substitute the *corruption vision* with a new vision of a great new Nigeria.

In order to do this, we need to look for our gold nuggets in the dirt of our problems. We must begin to see the new Nigeria of our dreams where all things work the way they ought to.

For example, begin to see in your mind's eye:

- Uninterrupted power supply
- Pipe borne water flowing from every tap
- Direct access to domestic gas in every home
- Well maintained green areas and safe roads

“A king doesn't go on transfer.”

African Proverb

- The cleanest streets in the world
- Direct access to the internet in every home
- Any other good thing you can imagine about our future

If we happily take responsibility, we will stop being part of the problem. This will go a long way in taking us to the Promised Land, the great new Nigeria of our dreams.



“Who advocates for Nigeria? Who defends the national interest today or is it left to all, but no particular individuals? If the Nigerian elites are being upbraided for their obvious parochial stance on national matters, such an indictment ought to represent a special challenge for the group to take up the gauntlet and act in accordance with that which will improve their honour and pride.”

CHIEF OLAYINKA SIMOYAN

“The battle that has a fixed date can hardly claim the life of a cripple.”

African Proverb



*"Crooked trees do not
give straight shadows."*

AFRICAN PROVERB

Let's Do It Right! But What is Right?

"To see what is right and not do it, is want of courage, or of principle."

CONFUCIUS

"We are all ready to be savage in some cause. The difference between a good man and a bad one is the choice of the cause."

WILLIAMS JAMES

"The truth is Nigeria has what it takes to be great: vast youthful population, rich diversity, and excellent human and mineral resources.

The only missing link is the effective collaboration and harmonisation of this potential.

And this, gentlemen, is the task before us as leaders and aspiring leaders.

After so many years of a 'something-must-be-done' attitude, it is high time we began to adopt the 'I-must-do-something' alternative.

Nigeria has a great future."

PASTOR TAIWO ODUKOYA

(THE GUARDIAN, 5 SEPTEMBER 2006, FRONT PAGE)



*"You cannot
drown a frog by
throwing
it into a pond of
water."*

African Proverb



*“After spanking
a child with the
right hand we
must console him
with the left.”*

African Proverb

What is considered *right* in our society today is relative. It basically depends on the person's perception of the situation at the time – situational ethics.

For many, their perception of things has been so twisted over the years that they really don't know anymore. This is so because so many things went so wrong for so long. Now, everybody is paying the price.

Currently, people have a hard time discerning right from wrong. Another factor is that, for a great number of years, the wrong people have been setting the standards.

The Nigerian society is in dire need of extraordinary role models. Societal values have been completely eroded. I sincerely believe that scores of Nigerians do wrong inadvertently or unintentionally. They just don't know any better because they don't know any better.

They see crooks being honoured with accolades, chieftaincy titles, national awards, etc. Some are even appointed to important political offices in government.

Conversely, many men and women of character who for years served our nation diligently are looked upon with disdain because they have no ill-gotten wealth to display. The unequivocal message is that the crooks are worthy of emulation; they are the ones society celebrates. At the same time, they think that people of goodwill are foolish (*mumus*) who did not make use of their opportunities to illegally enrich themselves.

In the process, Nigerians have learnt, subconsciously, that integrity doesn't pay. Even a former governor of Gongola State (present day

Taraba and Adamawa states), the late Colonel Yohanna Madaki, made a statement to that effect when he criticised what he saw as the growing culture of corruption. He said, *“What use is it to be righteous? Those who refused to be corrupted are poor, and are called fools.”* (*Great Africans on the Record*, 1994)

This statement is food for thought and encapsulates the moral crisis we are facing. It also explains why some Nigerians find it difficult to do right or to separate right from wrong. Social values have been steadily warped over the years.

Our national psyche has been bastardised.

Human beings tend to follow the path of reward; that is to say, whatever the society rewards. If corrupt people are ‘rewarded’, others take their cue from that.

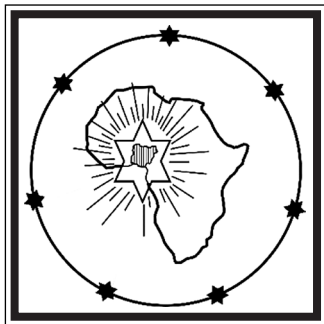
I heard this incredible story that has a bearing on this issue of right and wrong. A young Nigerian Christian, who I will call Incredible Joe, gave the following testimony in church: *“Praise the Lord, God has been very good to me,”* he said. He continued the testimony by saying: *“For many years I sat for GCE (i.e. General Certificate of Education) and I failed but thank God this year I got someone to write the exam for me and this time I passed. Praise the Lord with me somebody! Shout Halleluiah! Thank you, Jesus!”*

As incredible as Incredible Joe’s story may sound, it is unfortunately a reflection of what is happening in the larger society. I am of the opinion that if Incredible Joe had the slightest inclination that what he did was wrong, he wouldn’t have gone to church to share it as a testimony of God’s goodness. The issue here is simple: he just didn’t know any better.



“One who hides
his sickness
cannot hide his
death.”

African Proverb



It is unnerving that people in our society do not know right from wrong. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that it be taught. It must be taught in our homes, in our schools, in our religious institutions, on the job - everywhere possible and at every available opportunity.

We need to educate our people in word and in deed on what are the accepted societal values in our nation. A complete reorientation of our national psyche is a must!

Doing the right thing is about developing character and not about what is convenient. In Nigeria, doing the right thing is hardly ever convenient. At this point in our evolutionary process of nation-building, we need men and women of substance who will always try to do the right thing, regardless of the personal sacrifice entailed.

Doing the right thing also includes properly executing our social and civic responsibilities. Our social responsibility represents our responsibility to our fellow citizens, while our civic responsibility represents our responsibility to our communities and government.

The following true story illustrates what both our civic and social responsibilities entail.

A retired gentleman in his seventies called Dr. Barnabas (not his real name) had a businessman in his forties called Chief Davidson (not his real name) as his tenant in a highbrow area of Lagos. Both were Nigerians.

Chief and Mrs Davidson and their children had lived in Dr. Barnabas's house for seven years without any major misunderstanding.

*"If the great
river stops flow-
ing, where
will the fishes
swim?"*

African Proverb

In 2004, Dr. Barnabas decided to increase the rent. Chief Davidson didn't take kindly to it. Therefore, he was issued six months' quit notice, as the law stipulated.

Chief Davidson and his family packed out a month after the expiry of the notice.

Chief Davidson left Dr. Barnabas's house with an unpaid electricity bill of over N20,000 and unpaid water bills of over N80, 000. He also owed Dr. Barnabas eight months' rent.

Chief Davidson's civic responsibility was to have paid his electricity and water bills to the government, while his social responsibility was to have paid his remaining eight months' rent.

There are a number of Nigerians like Chief Davidson and it is noteworthy that they are normally the first to blame government for ineptitude. They don't understand that they have no moral justification to castigate government when they are found wanting in their civic and social responsibilities.

It is easy to point an accusing finger at government and at other people, forgetting that our other fingers are pointing back at us.

Fulfilling our civic and social responsibilities is a must in nation-building.

Examples of our civic responsibilities include:

- Paying bills
- Paying taxes
- Respecting public property. (Treat public property the way you treat your personal assets.)



*"A lazy man
always blames
his tools."*

African Proverb



- Keeping the environment clean; do not litter
- Obeying traffic lights and road signs
- Not forging documents or certificates
- Respecting the rule of law

Examples of our social responsibilities include:

- Imbibing the queue culture
- Being punctual
- Being polite, courteous and respectful
- Paying debts owed to fellow citizens
- Not urinating in public places
- Refraining from indecent exposure
- Respecting the individual regardless of what kind of job she may hold - there must be dignity in labour
- Not defrauding your employers of time or money
- Being fair to one's employees
- Switching off your phone (or putting it on vibration) at meetings, during services in church, during prayers at the mosque, etc

If men and women of goodwill in our country behaved with the same zeal with which the corrupt execute their acts, we would have become a great nation by now.

History has shown us that when the elites do not take care of the masses, the masses make sure they 'take care' of the elites!

*“One who plants
a mango tree by
the road should
not expect to
reap its fruits
alone.”*

African Proverb

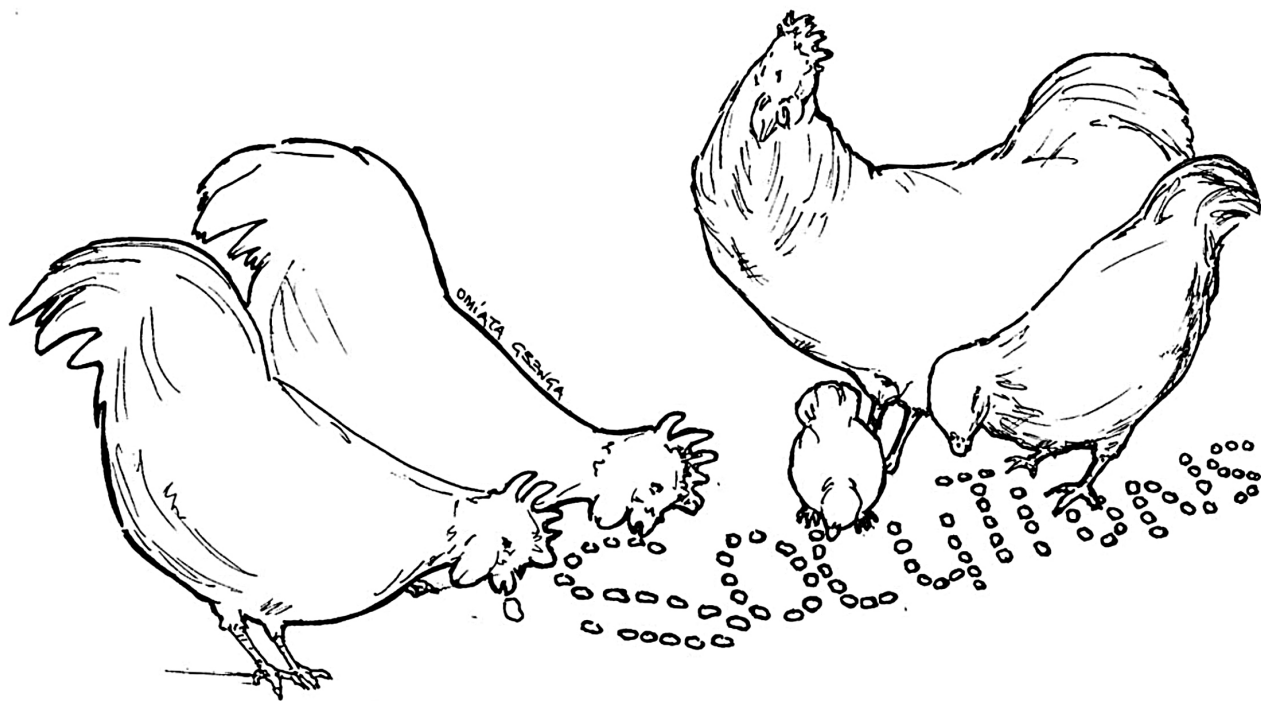


*“How can we say ‘thank you’ to Nigeria?
We cannot all build orphanages or supply
computers and books to schools. We cannot
all become politicians. We cannot all build
hospitals and supply medicines. These are
big projects that cannot be embarked on
alone in most cases. Most of us in the Di-
aspora do not have that type of financial
edge, but we can do little things that will
change lives and give back to a country
that had helped to shape us.”*

ONYINYE OYEDELE
(THE PUNCH, 18 JANUARY 2006, P. 15)

*“When a dog
sees a tiger’s face,
it must become
silent.”*

African Proverb



*"The hen says it is from continuous pecking
that it gets a good meal."*

AFRICAN PROVERB



If the Future of Nigeria is Dependent on You, What Will You Do?

"The future depends on what we do in the present."

MAHATMA GANDHI

"The quickest way to correct the other fellow's attitude is to correct your own."

KING VIDOR

"It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare: it is because we do not dare that things are difficult."

SENECA

"What does self-government mean? It means that we must all work hard. We must all show tolerance to each other. We must all behave responsibly and obey the laws as good citizens of our united self-governing region."

AHMADU BELLO

(GREAT AFRICANS ON THE RECORD)

If the future of Nigeria depends on me, what will I do? And what will I start doing differently? One has asked these questions a million-and-one times (my expression for countless) and one is still asking.

*"The tiger that
kicks the leaves
about in
the bush is not a
good hunter."*

African Proverb



The thoughts, ideas and solutions in this book came as a result of asking these questions.

One would also like to ask you the same question rephrased: *“What will you do differently if the future of Nigeria depends on you?”*

Asking this question will cause a major paradigm shift in the way you see our country’s problems. The question puts direct responsibility for the future of Nigeria on you, leaving you with nowhere to hide.

In trying to answer this question you will not be able to continue to blame our past leaders, or the government, or those in authority.

If we take a critical look at what government really is, then we are bound to conclude that it is the people of Nigeria. They are the real government. The politicians in office are the people’s elected representatives. They are there to serve us; they are there to design and implement policies that favour us, the people.

If you dare to change your mindset and make the destiny of our nation your personal responsibility, something incredible will awaken inside of you. Something will happen to the way you see things; you will see things differently. It will be as if the scales fell from your eyes.

You will see solutions where you never thought them possible. You will also be able to implement some of those solutions in your circles of influence. The solutions will be simple. You will discover that they were there all along.

*“The mushroom
cannot forget
the dead trunk
from which it
grows.”*

African Proverb

You will realise that you do not have to be in government to start making the little changes that you can make where you are. Changing your mindset opens the door of opportunities; it opens up your eyes to see the solutions as you go about your business.

For those of you who travel abroad frequently, with this new mindset, your next trip will be a revelation; a completely remarkable experience. Everywhere you go, you will see things differently; you will see things you can adapt to the Nigerian situation. Solutions will beckon to you wherever you go.

In the past, many Nigerians who travelled frequently never really believed in the possibility of Nigeria becoming a developed nation like the United States, Canada, Great Britain, France or Japan. That was why most of us never saw possible solutions to our nation's problems whilst abroad.

There are solutions everywhere just waiting to be discovered. And we will discover them with our new mindset.

Often in life, we do not see because we are not looking. The following story illustrates this point. Two young ladies were strolling down the street when one of them suddenly bent down to pick a N500 note which the other had stepped over.

The second lady said, *“That is strange, I don’t remember ever finding money in the street.”* She never expected to find any, so she never looked.

Meanwhile, the first lady kept at the back of her mind the possibility of finding money in the street. This invariably made her more observant to spotting *‘Zik’s face’* in an unfamiliar setting. This lady simply developed an eagle eye for spotting the unusual



“A wise rat does not attack a cat.”

African Proverb



by making a habit of always being on the lookout for the unusual. She had a hunter’s attitude to life.

We can develop an eagle eye for spotting solutions by making a habit of always being on the lookout for answers, opportunities and solutions to our nation-building problems.

The future of Nigeria does depend on you, so what are you going to do about it from now on? Each of us needs to develop a hunter’s attitude.



“Much as we all love Nigeria, the bitter truth is that being a Nigerian comes with some very grave responsibilities. And my fear is that we are perhaps unaware of it and so we take our responsibilities very lightly.

“The tree that stands by the bush suffers the slashes of the axe the most.”

African Proverb

Responsible to whom, you say? First to the African continent, and then to the rest of the world. We have a duty to fulfill to the African continent because Nigeria, the nation of my birth, the country that I love so dearly and I am passionate about, makes up roughly one-quarter of the African continent in numbers even if not in land area.

Yes! Nigerian citizens account for 25 per cent of the entire continent.

What this means is that when we, as a nation, get something right and we are doing it well, Africa can take the example from us knowing that at least a quarter of the continent can't be wrong.

On the other hand, if we don't get some things right, then the damage echoes throughout the continent. Not only that, we create a pool from which the rest of the world can be affected."

DR. BOLAJI OBADEYI
(PERSONAL FINANCE, VOL. 1, NO. 26, 13 SEPTEMBER 2006)



*"Character is
like smoke, it
cannot be
hidden."*

African Proverb



"No matter how ferocious the current may be, it is the calabash that triumphs over the river."

AFRICAN PROVERB

Little Things Create Big Changes

“Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little.”

EDMUND BURKE

“What you can do now is the only influence you have over your future. True greatness consists of being great in little things. The smallest good deed is better than the greatest intention.”

JOHN MASON

“Every citizen has at least two options open to him in relating to national events in his fatherland: He could decide to be apathetic, unconcerned, detached and dumb; or decide to be actively involved and expressive. The former creates cynics, while the latter creates critics - constructive critics. One subjects the nation to a process of progressive slow death; the other helps to regenerate and invigorate the nation.”

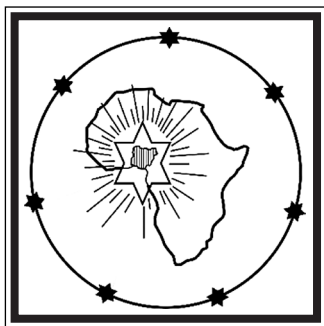
PROF. TAM DAVID-WEST

I have observed that we fall into seven groups when it comes to the issue of Nigeria, the way we see our problems as a nation and how we deal with them as individuals.



*“The butterfly
that wages a war
with the thorn
should be ready
to lose its fine
clothing.”*

African Proverb



*“Who can eat a
crab in secret?”*

African Proverb

The first group just wants to get out of the country by any means possible. They are young and fall between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. They are disillusioned, desperate and determined. They cannot see any future for themselves in Nigeria.

Their Golden Fleece is somewhere abroad - in Europe, the United States, Canada, Vietnam, Iran, Congo - anywhere but Nigeria!

They spend hours queuing up at embassies to obtain a visa to the country with their supposed Golden Fleece. They also spend hundreds of thousands of naira that could have otherwise been invested in setting up a business at home. Some of them are so daring that they go through the Sahara to Libya, or other North African countries in a bid to cross the Mediterranean to Europe.

In the desperate attempt to get to Europe, a good number have paid with their lives.

The second group is not interested in leaving the country; they can't see themselves living anywhere else. However, they are passive, docile, apolitical, *“Que sera sera - whatever will be will be,”* is their philosophy of life. Their attitude is, *“You can't change anything, the problems are beyond us all, let us make the best of our hopeless situation.”*

The third group criticises, finds fault and grumbles non-stop about everything and anything to do with government. They also complain endlessly about the problems of Nigeria without providing any solutions. At the slightest opportunity or provocation, they castigate the leadership and everyone in authority.

They are simply not ready to do anything to change the situation; they don't like the situation and they won't change it. They con-

sistently feed their minds and the minds of others with the latest government scandal or crisis in the country. They don't believe in the government of the day (whichever government it may be); they have completely lost faith in the leadership of our country. They are demoralised, dejected and live in abject despair.

The fourth group is successful and comfortable. Some of them own businesses; others have high-paying jobs in banks, oil companies, telecommunications, etc. Their attitude is, *"Well, so far as I am doing well and can provide for my family, I can't be bothered with Nigeria's many problems."* Those with well-paid jobs say to themselves, *"For as long as I have my job and my fat pay cheque is coming in monthly, then everything is well with me. I can't really do anything about the Nigerian situation, can I? So I can't be accused of doing nothing."*

Some people in this group take it a step further when other Nigerians are going through hard times by making statements such as:

- *Things are difficult for me!*
- *Things are hard in this country!*
- *What can we do to make ends meet in this country?*

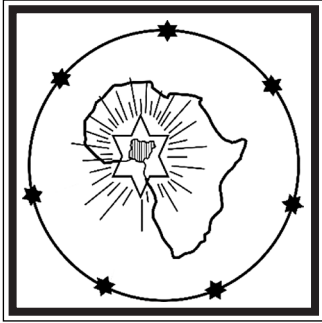
Instead of being honest, they readily agree that the generality of Nigerians are going through hard times and even pretend that they, too, are having financial problems. If only they could just show these people in need a way out of their predicament by counselling them and teaching them the basic principles of wealth-creation. This way, they would end up playing their part in solving Nigeria's numerous problems.

The fifth group are the men and women of ill-will who are corrupt and who consistently try to corrupt the system. They obtained their wealth from the corrupt system (through bribes,



*"Character is a
god. It supports
you according to
your behaviour."*

African Proverb



*“A hunter with
only one arrow
does not shoot
recklessly.”*

African Proverb

overinflated contracts, etc) and want to maintain the status quo at all costs.

This, they believe, will ensure they keep benefiting from the same system which enriched them. The word “*change*” does not exist in their vocabulary. They love the way the system operates in Nigeria. And they will do whatever it takes to keep it like that, even if it means killing those who get in their way.

The sixth group is genuinely concerned about the turn of events in Nigeria. They care about the future of our nation and would like to do something. Unfortunately, they don’t know what to do or how to go about creating positive social change. They have zeal but they don’t know where or how to channel it to produce the great new Nigeria of our dreams.

The final group is creating the little changes where they are. Some are effecting positive change in their own spheres of influence. They are not waiting for the big opportunity, nor are they waiting to do something impressive, nor are they waiting to become elected officers or political bigwigs.

This group of people understands that the little changes they make will, over a period of time, add up to the big changes they desire. They also recognise that they are like pebbles creating ripples of change in the murky waters of all our problems.

It is also interesting to note that, as they do these little things, bigger opportunities occur which give them the chance to do something greater, thereby throwing them into the limelight. Chief Gani Fawehinmi, Dr. Beko Ransome-Kuti, Mrs Ayo Obe, Mr Femi Falana, Mr Olisa Agbakoba, Prof. Wole Soyinka, Mr Festus Keyamo, etc. are the names we hear of today, but they all started

by making little changes where they could until the bigger opportunities presented themselves.

I believe you will be able to locate yourself somewhere in one of these groups. If you are not in the final group and you desire to be there, you can begin to work on yourself and your attitude.

Start making little changes where you are and greater opportunities will eventually come your way.

Quite often, people do nothing to change the status quo because they feel that the little they can do will not make a significant difference. That is not true. Every little change counts in nationbuilding. Bruce Barton once said, *"Sometimes, when I consider what tremendous consequences come from little things ... I am tempted to think ... there are no little things."*

The little things are what big things are made of. The atomic bomb that America dropped on two Japanese cities that caused so much destruction was designed from an invisible entity called the atom.

Little droplets make up the ocean. Little things do make a big difference, for good or ill.

According to the Epistle of James (3:3-5), a forest can be set on fire by a tiny spark. The tongue is a small thing but what great destruction it can cause. It can make or break a person. We can make a horse turn around and go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. Likewise, a tiny rudder makes a huge ship turn whichever way the captain wants it to go. In Nigeria, a small group of influential people has been in power since independence. It is also a small group of corrupt men and women



*"The stone we
throw at the co-
conut may
come back to
meet us."*

African Proverb



*“The bird whose
feathers are
needed to
prepare a charm
hardly flies low.”*

African Proverb

who uphold corruption in high places. A few scammers have also succeeded in giving us a bad name in the international community.

An American President, Thomas Jefferson, once said, *“He does most in God’s great world who does his best in his world.”* A few brave men along with Thomas Jefferson appended their signatures to the Declaration of Independence. During this period when the United States was a colony of Great Britain, signing this document was as good as using their blood to sign their death warrant. The signatories committed high treason by that very act. However, that was the beginning of the American Revolution, which led to their independence.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., together with a small group of courageous men and women, formed the Montgomery Improvement Association, which initiated the Montgomery bus boycott and gave birth to the civil rights movement which changed America for good. This movement paved the way for desegregation.

A few nationalistic men like Chief Nnamdi Azikiwe, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, among others, helped Nigeria to negotiate her independence from colonial Great Britain.

Little things, little changes do make a big difference. Margaret Mead states, *“Never doubt a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”*

You do not need government to get you started or to help you do the right thing. If the only little thing you can do everyday is to stop littering our streets; this singular act will be one step in the right direction to creating a great new Nigeria.

There is no positive action or step that is too small. They all add up to form the critical mass of change that we so desperately desire. It is our personal responsibility to do what we can where we are, and to change what we can where we are.

As we make those little changes in our personal lives, the people in our spheres of influence will be positively affected. Just as little droplets make up the ocean, so also will the little things we do become waves of positive social change in our nation.

As they say, we are what we repeatedly do, so here are some of the little things you can do to help create the great new Nigeria:

- Assume ownership of Nigeria and come up with creative ideas to solve our problems. Become a brain-stormer. Learn to **Think Things Through** (TTT)!
- Have character; be a man or woman of integrity
- Be a committed person. Have 100 per cent commitment in whatever you do
- Respect and obey constituted authority
- Be patriotic
- Put Nigeria before your ethnic origin
- Always set a good example in whatever you do
- Live a disciplined life
- Be the best you can be
- Have the spirit of excellence in all you do
- Be a peacemaker wherever possible
- Develop good reading habits
- Lighten someone's burden daily
- Always go the extra mile at home, at work, at play and in the streets
- Be kind
- Be polite to Nigerians in both low and high places
- Always wear a smile



*“It is the person
who throws ashes
that the ashes
follow.”*

African Proverb



*“The house of a
person we love is
never far.”*

African Proverb

- Use the words excuse me, thank you, please and sorry as and when necessary
- Learn to overlook insults, especially those from bus drivers and conductors, okada riders, and other motorists and pedestrians.
- Use the “FIDO” (Forget It and Drive On), or “FIMO” (Forget It and Move On) principle
- Cultivate an incurably optimistic attitude towards life
- Respect public property; treat it the way you treat your own
- Make someone’s day by doing something they will never ever be able to repay you for
- Make someone’s day by doing something that they will never know who did it
- Be an owner of Nigeria
- STOP defacing our environment with posters
- Reward people who exhibit real ownership of Nigeria - when you see it in action and whenever you have the opportunity
- Take responsibility for the destiny of your nation
- Provoke fellow Nigerians to say the right things
- Provoke fellow Nigerians to do the right things
- Work at becoming a better person and the end result will be a better Nigeria
- Stop abusing the naira. And fix torn notes with cellotape when they come into your possession
- Stop spitting anyhow
- Stop for pedestrians at Zebra Crossings
- Look for someone to help and help the person
- Once in a while visit the slums to see how other Nigerians live. Then see what you can do to make life better for them. Ask the people what they need most in their community. Form different teams with like-minded people to get the job done
- Consistently watch out for ways to be an answer
- Learn to empathise with people by feeling their pain, or by walking in a friend’s shoes, or by living in a co-worker’s

neighbourhood, or by sitting in your boss' chair, or by riding in the buses with the masses

- Do something daily for someone which will take you out of your comfort zone
- Speak words of encouragement into another person's life daily
- Do something that will build up Nigeria daily and that will add value to the Nigerian project
- Develop your talents, skills and abilities
- For any complaints you hear about Nigeria, see if you can come up with at least three constructive solutions. Turn it into a game and invite others to participate
- Always, always, always see yourself as self-employed no matter the job you do. This will ensure that you always give your best
- Make sure that anywhere you find yourself, you ensure that the Nigerian factor fails woefully
- Do the right thing
- Contribute your time and/or money to nation-building *causes* and *activities*
- Do right by others because every person is an extension of God
- Be a good ambassador of Nigeria at all times

We always need to remember that, in life, the little things create the big things.

This list is by no means exhaustive; it is merely a starting point. If you pick just one thing on this list and you practicalise it everyday over a period of time (a month or more), it will become a habit in your life. With each new month, you can practicalise one more thing from the list and form into a habit for life.



*“A cat which is
trapped in a cor-
ner behaves like
a tiger.”*

African Proverb



If you keep this up faithfully, at the end of the first year an incredible revolution will have occurred in your life. It will also have a multiplier effect on your family, your relationships, your community and our nation.



“I am even looking towards that time when Nigerians will learn that leadership is not defined on the pages of newspapers. The quality of leadership is defined by the little things that a man does because he delivers.

*“With power
and wealth come
responsibility.”*

African Proverb

*The little things that a man does to
affect the lives of others.”*

PROF. ANYA O. ANYA



“This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody’s job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn’t do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.”

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

*“Only a familiar
dog licks one’s
body.”*

African Proverb

EPILOGUE

*“Always remember this:
The great things you desire for your own child
are the same great things
every Nigerian child rightly deserves.”*



*"The wise fisherman does not need
to be told to be mindful of the river
that drowns a duck."*

AFRICAN PROVERB

A Letter to the Parents of a Young Victim of a Decadent Society

"We are here to add what we can to life, not to get what we can from it."

WILLIAM OSLER

"The harder you fall, the higher you bounce."

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

"The best use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts life."

WILLIAM JAMES

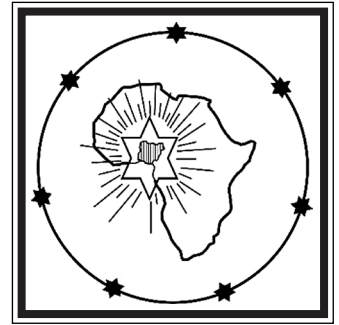
"I keep my ideals, because in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart."

ANNE FRANK

Dear Mom and Dad,

I write this letter to comfort and encourage you. I know you are hurting really bad. It is extremely difficult losing a child and more so, an only child. Please don't blame yourselves; you did your very best for me. You couldn't have done better.

I want you to remember what you always told me: that nothing happens without God knowing. That means He has prepared you for a time such as this. He has given you the grace to go through this period of your lives.



*"Proverbs are
the horses for
searching for the
truth."*

African Proverb



*“He who falls
into a ditch
teaches others
coming behind
to be careful.”*

African Proverb

Please forgive the young men who shot me. Release them to God. You must understand that they, too, are victims of a decadent society. You need to forgive them in order for you to move on.

Channel your anger, emotions, energy and resources into creating a great new Nigeria. Do it for my sake. Remember how I used to tell you that when I graduate, I'll come back home to build the great new Nigeria of my dreams. Now you will have to do it for me.

Please get involved in the lives of the youths. Also get involved in the lives of Nigerian children. They need hope for the future because they are the future.

Build youth centres and playgrounds for them. Get actively involved in nation-building. If you get involved, you will rest assured that my death was not in vain.

Mom and Dad, so many Nigerians have taken so much from Nigeria without ever thinking of putting anything back. Please continue to give back to Nigeria and the people of Nigeria as you have done over the years.

Now, more than ever, Nigeria needs people who will give of their substance. Nigeria needs people who will go over and above the call of duty. Nigeria needs people who will give aggressively and selflessly to our nation their money, time and resources for the purpose of nation-building. This is the only way national development can take place. There is a price to pay.

I remember a quote I learnt in my philosophy class at Harvard. A British philosopher once said, *“Evil will triumph in any society where men of goodwill keep silent in times of moral crisis.”*

The elite in Nigeria have created a cocoon for themselves. They believe that the evil in the society cannot penetrate it. As you have personally experienced, both the rich and the poor are affected by the decadence in the society. The rich can't sleep well and the poor are hungry.

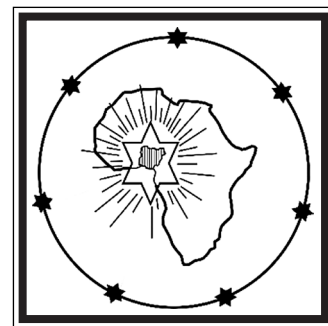
The elite must now exercise leadership and take personal responsibility for the masses and the nation. If they don't pay the price for change now; the price in the future will be much higher. As they say, *"If you don't ensure a change, change would ensure you change."*

I don't want my friends to die the way that I did. It is not necessary. I don't want the decadence in the society to consume them. I died so that my friends and many others might live a great life in a new Nigeria.

Let my death be a catalyst for positive social change in Nigeria. I was born for a time like this and I also died for a time like this.

Mom and Dad, you taught me so many great things that I can confidently say you too have been equipped for a time such as this. It is now time for you to pass all those things you taught me to a new generation of Nigerians.

Remember, there are many Moyos out there who need you. Please give them a better life in the new Nigeria I dreamt about. You gave me your very best. It is now time to give Nigeria your very best. One of the ways to channel your emotions and resources is by setting up a non-governmental organisation. You can name it MOYO for *"More Of You in Others."*



*"The nod of a
lizard does not
mean that all is
well."*

African Proverb



*“A wild fire does
not last a whole
year.”*

African Proverb

Please network regularly with other Nigerians who have lost loved ones as a direct result of the decadence and crises in Nigeria. **YOU NEED ONE ANOTHER!**

You see, this group of Nigerians can change Nigeria for the better if they want to. They have paid a high price for the decadence in the country. They can also feel the pain of the masses in a way that others can't. Therefore, they can effectively heal the pain.

With this group of people you can set up another NGO called NIVE (pronounced NIFE). It will stand for *“Not In Vain - Ever.”* NIVE can be used to cut out all the decadence in the Nigerian environment; it can also be used as a tool for national reformation and reorientation.

Open the bottom drawer in my wardrobe, the one with a green sticker on it. Under the clothes, you will find my journal - the one you gave me on my eleventh birthday. You told me to use it to document my thoughts, ideas, dreams and vision for the great new Nigeria I always talked about. And for the last eight years I did just that. I created a beautiful and wonderful new Nigeria in my journal.

Nobody has seen what I have written. I was planning to show you after I graduated. In my journal, I have drawn up a blueprint for a new Nigeria. Please take the blueprint for a new vision for our nation and publish it. Title the book, *THE 8TH WONDER of the World - Made in NAIGA*.

I poured my life into that journal, as you will see when you read it. Through this journal you will see me live in the hearts of Nigerians. What could be greater than that!

Thanks, Mom and Dad, for the life we shared together. I love

you and I always will. Now, please go and share the vision with the nation. The youths of Nigeria are waiting. The children of Nigeria are waiting. They are now your children. Love them the way you loved me. You had one child before and now you have a million-and-one.

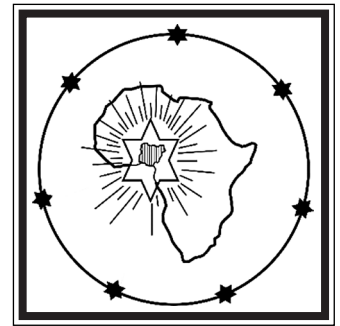
Remember, MOYO means I REJOICE! It is time for you to rejoice with other Nigerians for the great opportunity you now have as a nation to build a new Nigeria, which I only saw in my dreams.

THE 8TH WONDER vision is the product of what I learnt from you over the years. Use the journal (and a blog) to tell Nigerians my story.

Thanks for being my Mom and Dad.

Love from your son,

Moyo



*“He who hides
his true identity
is ashamed of it.”*

African Proverb



*“A kingdom
without a king is
like a chicken
without a head.”*

African Proverb

“Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I cannot do a certain thing, it is possible that I may end by really becoming incapable of doing it. On the contrary, if I shall have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it, even if I may not have it at the beginning.”

MAHATMA GANDHI



Acknowledgements

*“One who thanks his benefactor
is paving the way for greater benevolence.”*

AFRICAN PROVERB

It is said that when the student is ready, a teacher walks into her life. Well, that is exactly what happened to me a little over a year ago. Shortly after I started writing this book my mentor and friend, Mr Tunde Oyewole, was introduced to me. And through his rigorous mentorship, he brought out the very best in me. He ensured that I gave my fellow Nigerians the very best in this book. For this I say: Thank you, Mr Oyewole.

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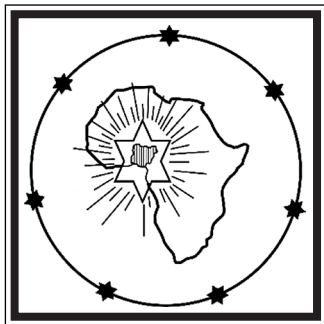
I acknowledge Nigeria's founding fathers for the role they played in ensuring that Nigeria became an independent nation:

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